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# NEW STATESMAN

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# The Legacy of October

No event of modern times has engaged more passion or generated more controversy than the Russian Revolution. To men and women still living and working, it was the signal for an end to imperialism and war, perhaps even to exploitation itself. It gave birth to the only world-wide political movement ever seen – the Communist International – and it also destroyed it. It gave powerful impetus to the global movement of national liberation – and also betrayed it when opportune moments arose. It seemed to embody the actual possibility of socialism – and also to disfigure and discredit the socialist idea. The images of Soviet power are not now those of a hungry and embattled state of the workers, but of a coarse and brutal super-state with tentacular designs on other nations and a policy of ruthless conformity imposed on its own citizens.

This is an ambiguity which any intelligent person can recognise. To an ill-armed and isolated guerrilla fighter in Southern Africa, the Soviet Union may indeed pose as the motherland of the oppressed. While for any sophisticated or thoughtful European communist, integrity is measured in the units of distance which he or she can take from the Moscow line. But there are, of course, many people for whom this subtle dilemma does not exist. For the Portuguese Communist Party, say, or the frightened Czech puppet official, nothing has changed since Stalingrad was the dividing line in politics. For Lord Chalfont or Margaret Thatcher, the unfolding of a revolution is simply a straightforward passage to tyranny and regimentation. This one-dimensional view seems strange when it comes from people who will normally deny that there are any iron laws or observable rhythms in history.

Sir Harold Wilson has chosen this moment to enter the lists on behalf of the second interpretation. Fresh from praising Stanley Baldwin and Harold Macmillan in the pages of a potboiler, he has donned the mantle of Ernie Bevin to attack cooperation with Eurocommunism. Yet even his own article – not to speak of his own career – disclosed the admission that there were many areas in which social democracy had failed, and capitalism offered no future. The state of affairs cannot be wished away by allusions to 1948, and certainly not by the man who visited Czechoslovakia a few years after the invasion and urged a policy of 'let bygones be bygones'.

Every oligarchy in history has required some method of legitimation – whether it be a priesthood, a divine right or a responsibility to protect the Free World. The Russian ruling caste has the most absolutist system on the face of the earth. Other dictatorships trample on pluralism and freedom while invoking them. The USSR is against them as *ideas*. It has reproduced the ancient Asiatic despotism whereby the citizen is the property of the state. Its claim to legitimacy is based on the inheritance of the Bolshevik revolution. Its reactionary foes concede this claim gladly, as a means of slandering socialist principles *tout court*. But many revisionist historians, few of them actually to the Left, have shown that Stalinism was a negation of October, not simply a continuation of it. The Gulag system was built on the dead bodies of the Bolshevik old guard.

If this multifaceted interpretation is right, then humanity is not faced with the straight choice between capitalism and Stalinism that many forces, for reasons of their own, would like to impose. For one thing, the impulse which has drawn people to Leninism in the past is not, and never was, comparable to the instincts played upon by fascism. Today, many of the most courageous opponents of tyranny in the countries of the Warsaw Pact are Marxists who have played no small part in the sea-change undergone by Srs Berlinguer or Carrillo. Only a really vicious revival of the Cold War could polarise them again. Meanwhile, the red thread linking today with Petrograd has been broken – by the Moscow trials, by the rubble of Budapest, by the current carnage in Ethiopa. China stands against Russia in the name of communism. Eurocommunists stand against it in the name of democracy. Still others in the name of national emancipation. All this is to the good. The worship of totems is no help in 'constructing the socialist order'.

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# Spotlight on Politics

**James Fenton**

# European Phone-In

FENTON: Good morning, listeners, and welcome to the Jimmy Fenton Weekly Spotlight Phone-In, the programme where *you* get a chance to ask *your* questions and air *your* views on *your* problems. This week sees the publication of the new controversial Bill for direct elections to the European Parliament, so let's start the day the Spotlight way. If *you* have any questions, now's *your* chance to phone 01-405 8471 (and remember, if *you're* in the Greater London region, that 01 is a no-no). I'll be welcoming any questions on the power, functions and procedures of the brand-new, superspecial, supersonic, supranational European Parliament. And our first caller is already on the line. She's Mrs Hilda Murgatroyd from Spennymoor. Hallo Mrs Murgatroyd. Can you hear me?

MURGATROYD: Yes, Jimmy, I can. I'd like to know –

FENTON: What's the weather like up there in Spennymoor, Mrs Murgatroyd? Pretty nippy?

MURGATROYD: Yes Jimmy, it is. What I'd like to –

FENTON: Do you find you're getting *chaps* in odd places, Mrs Murgatroyd?

MURGATROYD: Why yes, I do, but –

FENTON: Because I had an auntie in Spennymoor, lovely little woman, who went to the doctor and said, 'Doctor, I keep getting these chaps at the top of my legs.' And the doctor looked at her and he said, 'Well, why don't you cut six inches off the top of your Wellingtons?'

MURGATROYD: Oh, oh, you are a caution, Jimmy. Can I ask my question, please?

FENTON: All right, love, spit it out.

MURGATROYD: My question is, what is the Luns-Westerterp procedure?

FENTON: I'm sorry, love, you'll have to speak a little more distinctly. What is what?

MURGATROYD: What is the Luns-Westerterp procedure?

FENTON: Listen, love, I asked for questions about the European Parliament. Do you mind just hanging on the line and I'll get back to you if we have a chance later. Now we have Mr Albert Pennyfeather in Borrowash. Do you have a question, Mr Pennyfeather?

PENNYFEATHER: Well, first of all, Jimmy, can I answer Mrs Murgatroyd's question about the Luns-Westerterp procedure, because it's something that I think is very important in the field of external relations, where consultation is a delicate business because external relations, issues, Jimmy, usually involve negotiations with third countries, if you follow me, and they may involve 'mixed' procedures – that is to say, a mix of Community and Member State agreements which –

FENTON: Well, I'm sure that's very interesting, Mr Pennyfeather, but you know we've got a lot of other people who want to put their point of view, and it's not fair if one person hogs the show. I'll try to get back to you later, but now we've got Mrs Dolly Blenkinsop in Hindley. Hello Dolly, well hello Dolly – you don't mind me calling you Dolly do you, love? What's on your mind?

BLENKINSOP: Well, Jimmy, I just wanted to say that I think Mr Pennyfeather was quite right. The EP – the way I see it – may need to be informed rapidly and confidentially about external matters. This is what Mrs Murgatroyd was asking about. Through the Luns-Westerterp procedure, Parliamentary Committees are informed by the Commission of the progress of negotiations and the President of the Council informs them of the content of an agreement *when it is initialled* – this is the important point, to my mind – but *before* it is concluded by the Council. You see, there is an interesting contrast between decision-making in the Community and in the Member States. The formulative stages in the Community are relatively very much more open, but the making of the final decisions is much less so. The Council deliberates behind closed doors: in practice it is as much a forum for inter-governmental negotiations between Member State bureaucracies as a legislative body. Do you see what I'm driving at, Jimmy? Hello? I said, do you see what I'm driving at?

MURGATROYD: Perhaps I could chip in here, if you don't mind, Mrs Blenkinsop, because while I quite agree with what you've just said, nevertheless I think you should have emphasised that the Council *is* a legislature. It acts by passing: (1) *regulations*, which apply directly as law in Member States; (2) *directives*, which bind the Member States as to 'the result to be achieved', but not as to means; (3) *decisions, recommendations* and *opinions*. To this list could also be added a fourth category of non-Treaty acts – *resolutions* and *declarations* which have political but not legal force, and which it is important – the way I see it – should not become substitute for Community legislation proper.

FENTON: Well, thank you very much Mrs Murgatroyd, but I must break in there to introduce a Mr Anthony Howard of Holland Park. Mr Howard, what do you think of the programme so far?

HOWARD: Well, Jimmy, I don't want to put you off your stride, but I think you've already gone off the rails. You're not doing what I asked, which was to examine the implications of regional list as opposed to first-past-the-post.

FENTON: Well thank you very much Mr Howard, but right now we've got a phone-call from a Mr Robert Jackson in Brussels itself. Mr Jackson, what do you think of the programme so far.

JACKSON: Well, I think it's terrifically exciting because it underlines the importance of the issues I have raised in a pamphlet I am publishing this week, at my own expense, and I rather hoped I might use your programme to plug it. The pamphlet is called *The Powers of the European Parliament*, and it's available from The Conservative Group for Europe, 1A Whitehall Place, London SW1, at £1.50 per copy. There's an introduction by Geoffrey Rippon.

FENTON: I thought he was dead.

JACKSON: One thing I'd like to emphasise, on the party political matter, is that there is a question-mark over the relationship between the EP and the economic and social interest groups which now exercise such a great influence at the national level. It should, however, be noted that the EP's position in this matter is relatively stronger than that of national parliaments. Interest and pressure group activity at the Community level is still relatively underdeveloped.

FENTON: Do you think, then, that as the Community's political system evolves a life of its own, it is probable that forms of political organisation will emerge at the European level which are not simply the projection of existing national forces?

JACKSON: Yes I do. One aspect of this will probably be the increasing autonomy of the European political parties. But perhaps in the long run of even greater significance may be the emergence of a European pattern of politics closer to that of the United States – a pattern of politics in which party plays a much less important role. The Community's implicit constitutional structure is much nearer to that of the United States than it is to any of the Member States, except perhaps France; and it seems that the separation of the executive from the legislative power makes for a political system in which parties are relatively weak and politics is organised around *ad hoc* coalitions of interest and opinion. And as the scope of the Community's activities and expenditure increases another, and perhaps more regrettable, parallel with American politics will probably tend to emerge in the shape of the 'pork-barrel'.

FENTON: A reference, I take it, to Geoffrey Rippon. Mr Jackson, it's been obvious from this programme that these issues are a subject of widespread debate and intense interest throughout the country. I hope everyone is better informed than they were a few minutes ago. I know I am. Until next week, then, good night.

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Corinna Adam

# Miners and Misunderstandings

Among the Christmas presents advertised for sale in the *Barnsley Post* is a model of a miners' lamp, price £7.50. The lady said it was not a toy, so that little Johnnie can imitate his father. It is a scale model, a 'fancy ornament' for the front room of a house which probably also has the real thing, hanging on a hook by the back door.

It seemed an appropriate image of mining communities' attitudes towards themselves. (How many Ford workers keep a model Cortina in pride of place on the mantelpiece?) Those lamps (the lady said they were selling well) represent the chief quality of miners, after their courage: their sentiment, always ready to spill over into passionate emotion. It was for reasons of sentiment, quite as much as political conviction or economic calculation, that the miners turned down their own union's recommended incentive scheme last week.

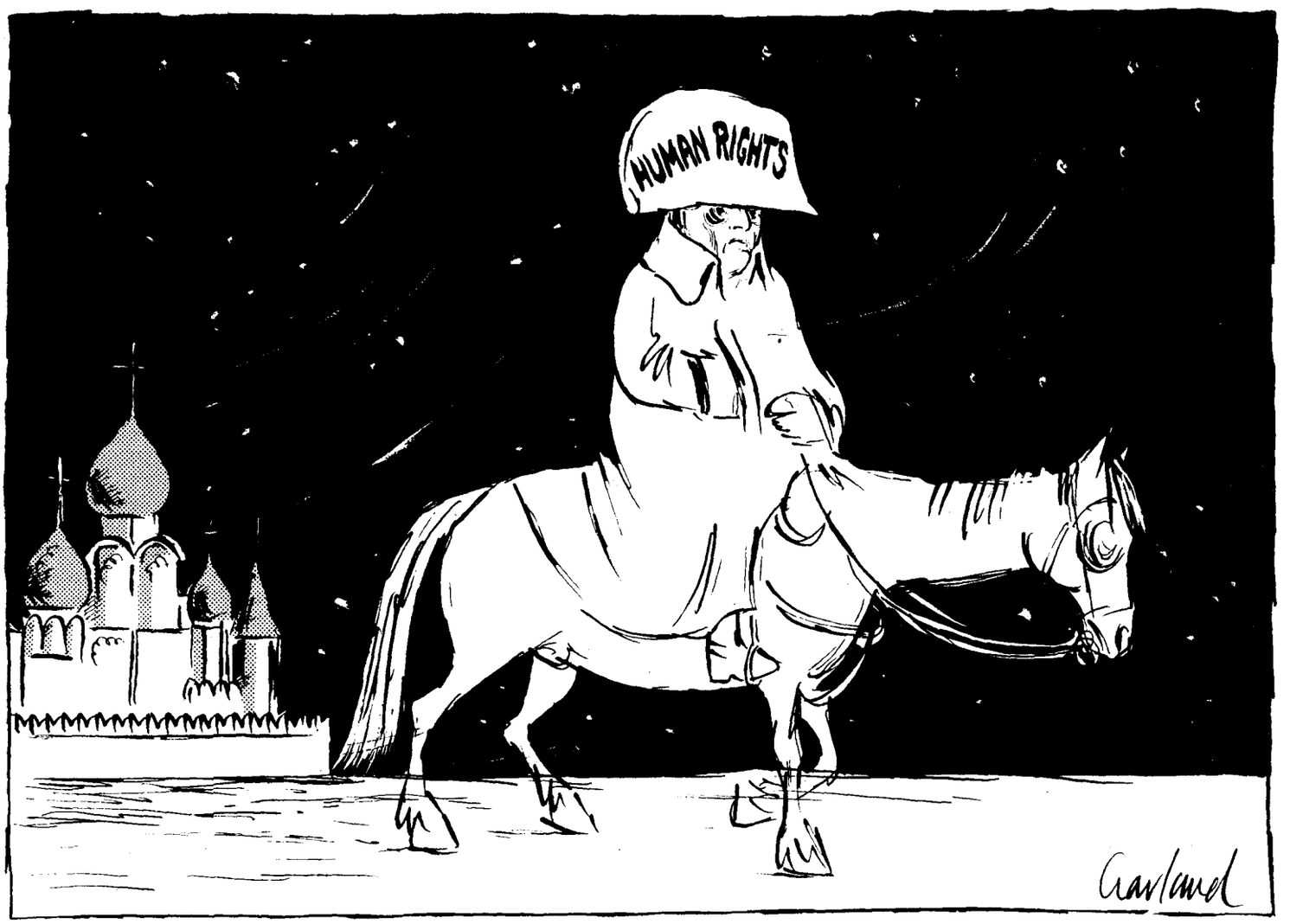
Sentiment works both ways. Not only do the miners believe they are getting a poor deal: they believe the public is unappreciative of what they do, ignorant about their pay and conditions, and disastrously misled by the media. This is so, according to them, either because we want a scapegoat or (a pleasing turn of phrase) 'You're the spokesmen for the class enemy, isn't that right love?'

'Look,' said another man at Barrow pit, feeling perhaps this was a bit oversimplified, 'the media pay more attention to us than any bloody union in the country. And they get it all wrong. They think we want to ruin the country. They think we want old ladies to die of cold. They probably think we eat babies. And all we want is a decent wage.' Everywhere, one is told that 'the public' mistakenly believes miners are already earning £100 a week. (In fact, most faceworkers only take home a basic pay of between £42 and £50; they often do not earn even the average industrial wage.)

We suffer, they feel, from plenty of other misapprehensions. Absenteeism is one, and it was raised with me without my asking by managers, not by miners. It is a regular feature of anti-miner stories, and the rate is generally given as around 25 per cent, which does sound bad. But that figure includes 8 per cent of the force away on educational courses, 4 to 5 per cent 'voluntary absences' – i.e. taking the odd day off without pay ('which I regard as a normal human right' said the manager) and only the remainder on 'sick leave' of varying credibility. Still, there is no question that it is high. And the answer is a simple one: that it often seems a waste of time for a low-paid worker to slog his guts out. Nobody ever suggests that social security rates should be reduced, of course: they mean the wages aren't good enough. And in the case of the NCB men, they believe some sort of incentive or bonus deal must eventually come.

So far in the present dispute – in 'militant' South Yorkshire, of all places – I saw no overt hostility between the managers and the men. After all, many of the managers were miners themselves once, just as their union opposite numbers were. Arthur Scargill says – as you might perhaps expect him to – that they have 'adopted the attitudes of management and its mentality'. Ho hum. It doesn't stop everyone drinking together after the Barrow Old Workmen's Tea (no nonsense here about calling people 'senior citizens').

I had thought Scargill's toughness, his apparent certainty that he is right, was probably itself a 'media invention'. It isn't. He is just as aggressive, just as articulate, just as bitter about his opponents on the NUM executive as he seems to be on TV. (He is also just as unexpectedly, suddenly charm-




*The Retreat from Moscow*

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ing.) To him there is a class war, and that is that: not for him the residual doubts that many miners have about bringing down a Labour government. 'I exist to serve my members,' he says, 'to behave differently towards a Labour government would be hypocritical. I *bleed* for my union.' There is no doubt that the press does get under his skin: if he were so inhuman as to feel nothing when he is presented as the nation's bogeyman, he would never have the following he does. He gets bitter when he is picked on for owning a Volvo car, since the implication is one of greed at his members' expense. But when the *Mail* spent, he said, £600 finding out who had restyled his hair (his wife) he made propaganda out of it with pleasure. And he faces accusations that he manipulates the miners with an air of, well, righteous anger.

It is a matter of opinion to what extent he has done so, and will continue to do so. The general view seems to be that his members are devoted to him, and will go wherever he leads. Though some men, often old enough to be his father – or elder brother anyway; he is 39 – wonder whether 'our Arthur' mayn't be getting a bit above himself. 'He shouldn't go down to bloody Grunwick and show himself off,' said one supporter. 'They don't want him, and his job's up here.'

One gets the impression – which is all it can be – that those 24 per cent of South Yorks miners who were not swayed by Scargill's opposition to the incentive scheme were those who had read both the NCB and the official NUM recommendations with some care. The scheme is incredibly complex, difficult even for men as experienced as they are in calculating day-rates, grades, shift systems. Scargill and his men – and here we return to sentiment and tradition – presented the scheme in the most alarming way: men would have to work harder for no more money, accident rates would rise, potential bonuses would be decided on a 'blue-eyed-boy' basis. 'I only have,' says Scargill, 'to walk down my village street, and look one way at the graveyard, or towards the hospital, to know why I am against any scheme which puts money before safety.' It is impossible not to be moved.

And so the majority were – not least in default of any competent propaganda from the other side. What there was arrived late, was badly presented and sometimes out of date, and was delivered with an air of apology, as though the NUM executive and the Coal Board had accepted the militants' view of them as playing three-legged footsie with the Government, and were terrified the other would find out. And it still seems extraordinary – even idiotic – to all concerned that, when the joint recommendations were being put to the test, both Joe Gormley and Sir Derek Ezra should be 'swanning round Australia'.

Nevertheless, no one appeared to think that a majority confrontation was on hand. There seem to be various reasons for this, not least that everyone wants a reasonable Christmas. Another – though only admitted quietly, or after a few pints – is indeed the lack of public support. No miner likes to say that he and his comrades cannot go it alone, or that they fear the consequences: but a few do, and more murmur their agreement. It may turn quarrelsome at NUM headquarters in London; in the South Yorks clubs, there still seems to be that air of friendly patience, of 'mustn't grumble'.

There is, though, just one great fear: a fear which goes very deep indeed. It is that the compromise which everyone hopes for, soon could be manipulated to split the union so that the 'good' boys in Notts, for instance, negotiate their own rates, and 'we go back 50 years along a bad old road'. By the time the evening had worn on to a somewhat maudlin state, the man who had earlier accused me, in the nicest possible way, of being his class enemy, led me into the hall and showed me the local banner. 'Arthur would accuse me of being sentimental, I dare say,' he said, 'but you notice where it reads "Unity is Strength"?' I am quite certain Arthur would accuse him of no such thing.

**Alexander Cockburn**

# Sex, Politics and the Family

As of last Tuesday night New York could boast of a Governor who is single (though a widower), a new Mayor in the form of Ed Koch who is single at the age of 52, a new City Council President in the shapelier form of Carol Bellamy who is single at the age of 35. You could say in fact that the elected leaders of the place are walking affronts to the concept of the bourgeois family.

Exactly what sort of affront was a topic handled with extreme nervousness during the campaign months. At least as regards Mr Koch. He spent so much time walking about with his campaign co-chairperson, a former Miss America by the name of Bess Myerson, that jokesters said they were Siamese twins joined at the hip. Finally, just a week before the election a profilist of Koch writing in the *New York Times* took a deep breath and wrote with agonised casualness:

> Miss Myerson is a formidable political talent [true], and her affection for Koch is genuine, but one of her functions is to dispel rumours that he is a homosexual . . . Politics being politics, rumours about Koch being a homosexual were almost certain to arise. There is not the slightest evidence to suggest that Koch is now, or ever was, a homosexual, or that his deepest passions have ever been engaged by anything other than politics and his career. Still, style may count for more than substance in a political campaign . . .

All of which even-handed prose started sliding the pin out of a potentially lethal grenade. A few hours after the profile appeared a television reporter was asking Koch whether such was indeed Miss Myerson's role and Koch was saying the words he had so fervently hoped to avoid: 'I don't happen to be a homosexual, but if I were, I would hope that I wouldn't be ashamed of it. God makes you whatever you are.' Now, the bad fairy-tale ending of all this would be a sordid campaign against Koch's imputed inclinations, culminating with the publication on election eve of documents purporting to reveal the damning facts. Defeat of Koch and triumph of his opponent, Mario Cuomo, a married Catholic with children to boot. There were, of course, some modest efforts to produce such a result. Persons associated with Cuomo's campaign did some delving with the aid of a private detective. The slogan 'Vote for Cuomo, not the Homo' went the rounds. But the detective came up with nothing and – with the hideous prospect of Anita Bryant holding a sudden press conference in the city narrowly averted – the subject simply fizzled out.

Nonetheless there are those who believe that, had it not been for the constant presence of Miss Meyerson hand-holding with Koch, the result might have been very different. Single males, on this proposition, don't stand too much chance at the polls unless photographed in the act of coition with someone of the opposite sex. The proposition is, as you will at once observe, somewhat tested by the fortunes of Governor Jerry Brown of California, unmarried at the age of 39.

Five months ago *New West*, a magazine widely circulated in California, ran a picture of Brown on its cover. He was being pelted with oranges and the cover-line was: 'Will Anita Bryant's crusade smear Jerry Brown?' Bryant, you may recall, was a woman renowned solely for her Florida orange juice commercial until she led a successful anti-homosexual campaign in Dade County earlier this year. 'Governor Jerry Brown,' said the article inside, 'has become a likely target for a political smear campaign simply because he is 39 and still single. The Governor's ascetic and private lifestyle – which has contributed to his immense popularity – has been speculated about quietly for years by politicians and voters Some Democrats say that the so-called closet issue is already hurting Brown. One prominent party official told *New West*: "The gay rights thing will make the death penalty fight look like peanuts. And I'm afraid it's going to hurt Jerry. He's going to have to do a lot of hand-holding with Linda in this campaign." (Brown is up for re-election next year.) 'Linda' is the singer Linda Ronstadt who is seen a good deal somewhat in the Myerson manner, in the Governor's company.

At least two opponents of Brown have seized the ball and run at the mouth with it. Los Angeles police chief, Ed Davis makes more or less open innuendoes and State Senator John Briggs, also running for the governorship, has said: 'When you look at the heart and soul of the Democratic Party, it is liberal-to-left. The Democrats are permissive, and they are very active involved with the homosexual communit

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People will have to choose between the lifestyle Jerry Brown leads – the hippy, Bohemian type – and the family-style I live with my wife Carmen, my three children and two grandchildren.'

An added problem for Brown is that he is also under fire from the San Francisco gay community for not being outspoken enough on gay issues. Unsurprisingly, since this is the same San Francisco which recently saw 44 candidates for the post of district supervisor (of which there are 11 all told) go before the Alice B. Toklas political club to seek endorsement. The Alice B. Toklas club is the city's largest gay political organisation and naturally most candidates declared themselves for gay rights.

Caught, though he may be, between two fires there is little evidence that Brown is really being damaged. Indeed, he survived some fairly spirited innuendoes in his first gubernatorial race. So, although no candidate for major elected office across the country has yet run as an avowed homosexual, nor is likely to do so in the near future, there is evidence that the voters simply do not care too much, so long as minimal decencies are maintained. Some do care, of course. In an astonishing article in a recent issue of *Harper's* magazine Norman Podhoretz, a particularly strident member of the military-intellectual complex, strove to analyse what he deemed to be the spirit of appeasement towards the Soviet Union. One of his central themes was that homosexuality among British intellectuals between the wars had weakened national resolve, eroded the bourgeois virtues, and led to complaisance towards Hitler and Stalin. Switching from contemplation of Auden, Isherwood and others to avowedly homosexual writers of the present era in the United States he detected the same pattern: assault on middle-class verities, the family and the flag. Above all, no appeasement.

It will be noted that both the Republican John Briggs, quoted above, and Podhoretz each contrast family-style with lifestyle, in a manner derogatory to the latter. And here, indeed, I think, we find the heart of the matter. It is not really to the point whether the voters can be apprised at some moment whether Koch, Brown or some other politician is or is not homosexual. Revelations in such situations can occur and they can be damaging. The point seems rather to be that many voters, in an increasing number of cases, seem no longer particularly enthused by politicians as proud and potent family symbols, equipped with wives and offspring. Accepting that the life-project of a politician is not to procreate but to gain power and exercise it, they do not clamour for the candidate's family photograph album. I say all this, notwithstanding Rosalynn Carter, Amy Carter and the paeans to family life issuing from the White House. Jerry is more popular than Jimmy. Politicians used to regard it as a prime task to sell themselves as family people. The fact that many of them – with much relief – are ceasing to bother with the pretence is really telling evidence that the poor old structure, replete with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets, is really under some stress.

*New York*

**Dev Murarka**

# Carrillo and the Kremlin

It was a collision between a *prima donna* and an immovable object. The collision was not visible but its sound waves are travelling in an enlarging circle. Actually Señor Santiago Carrillo and Mr Leonid Brezhnev never came face to face during Carrillo's brief stay in Moscow and that is his real cause of complaint. He was ignored. That is worse than being treated as an enemy.

To understand what actually happened, and why, it would be rash to rely on the heroic image being projected by Carrillo himself. But, first, let us have his version. Briefly, it is something like this: that he was invited by the Soviet Communist Party to take part in the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution; that he was invited to speak but that when he arrived he was not allowed to speak because some people, did not want to hear what he planned to say.

Reality is more complex. One only has to recall the background. Until very recently the Soviet media had been criticising Carrillo bitterly for his heretical ideas on the shape and form of future communism in Europe. The fact that this was Carrillo's first visit to the Soviet Union in seven years strengthens the impression that there is not much love lost between Carrillo and the Soviet leadership. Why, then, did he come knowing all this? The invitation was to the Spanish communists, not specifically to Carrillo – though when he indicated that he wanted to come as general secretary of the Spanish Party, Moscow had little choice but to acquiesce, even if unenthusiastically. It was willing to be correct and polite: no more.

This was where the trouble started. To begin with, Carrillo arrived a day late. He was not present when Mr Brezhnev made the keynote speech of the celebrations on the morning of 2 November at the Palace of Congresses inside the Kremlin. He arrived only after the first day's session had ended

when it was made clear to him that there would be no time for him to speak there. Instead he was offered the choice of speaking either at a factory meeting in Moscow or at a meeting in Kiev. These he declined with great indignation – construing the invitations as an insult to the Spanish Communist Party and himself. He told his hosts he must leave Moscow on 4 November without speaking anywhere.

But he did speak. He spoke to some Spanish correspondents by pre-arrangement, even before the question of his speaking had finally been settled, and told them that he was not being allowed to speak. In fact what he was not allowed to do was to speak at the main session in the Kremlin. But there is no evidence to suggest that a decision had been taken in advance to deny him the rostrum at the Kremlin. Indeed, according to a very reliable source, when the Italian Communist Party leader Sr Berlinguer arrived in Moscow – and he arrived two days before the session on 31 October – he was informed by his hosts that he would speak before Carrillo. But Carrillo did not arrive till after the final arrangements had been made.

Carrillo, of course, should have realised that communists are the most formal people on earth. If he did not have the courtesy to listen to Mr Brezhnev, why should he have assumed that Mr Brezhnev would have the politeness to listen to him? Naturally, suspicion is very strong here that he started off with the intention of making a scandal in order to gain popularity at home. Even before leaving Spain he was telling press correspondents that he did not know what reception he would get in Moscow, that they (the Soviet leaders) did not want to understand the latest changes occurring in Europe. Moreover after returning to Spain he robustly declared: 'It is clear that there no one speaks except those they want to speak, saying what they want to be said.'

This was hardly calculated to please Sr Berlinguer, who was at pains to emphasise his independent ideological stand. Nor was it much of a compliment to other European communists who made their differences from Moscow known from the forum in the Kremlin – notably the British Communist Party leader, Gordon McLennan who went so far as to say that under communism even anti-communist parties will be allowed to function. Of course, the Russians have not been as gracious to their troublesome guest as they might have been. But it is doubtful whether Carrillo would have been satisfied even if he had been asked to speak in place of Brezhnev. He was spoiling for a fight. Moreover, contrary to the impression being given by Carrillo his comrades are far from happy or even officially complimentary. Sr Berlinguer's dry comment in Rome was that, yes, he did bump into Carrillo in Moscow – in a shop.

*Moscow*

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Patrick Wintour

# Steelyard Blues

Even taking into account Sir Charles Dobson's tasteless drolleries, no one can regard British Leyland any longer as sick man of British industry. Over the past two years the British Steel Corporation, the state's other stake in manufacturing's commanding heights, has been challenging for that title. It is now indubitably theirs. Eighteen months ago Sir Monty Finniston, the BSC's previous chairman, was predicting that they would break even in 1976/77 and climb back into profit thereafter. As it turns out, the BSC is now losing over £1m. a day and by the end of this financial year will have kissed goodbye to over £700m. in three years. Finniston, himself, has departed along with his commercial manager; their long-term development plan now needs to be filed under fiction. Only last December the BSC promised to finance 50 per cent of this year's investment itself, it can now find no money. Through this year it will be claiming £950m. of government money (more than a tenth of the Government's total borrowing requirement) to finance its massive investment programme, second in size only to the money being poured into the North Sea. The BSC's total borrowing limits have been increased to £4,000m., one year ahead of schedule. And yet interest charges on long-term debt were only £138m.; £880m. of the debt is in the form of public dividend capital on which interest is only paid to the Government when profits are made. Joel Barnett is quietly watching the concept of public dividend capital being discredited by the BSC but US Steel, more agitated, is now busy filing anti-dumping suits against the British Government effectively writing off the BSC's losses. A House of Commons Select Committee on steel misled by the BSC's own over-optimistic figures is re-strengthening its already critical report.

In their public apologias, the BSC tend to present the self-evident as iconoclastic soul-searching; 'the problem is an attitudes problem more than anything else. It is the attitudes of the people who work in the Corporation towards each other and the attitudes they have to the people outside the Corporation.' Such generalities are hardly a sufficient explanation. When he is in less Boy-scoutish mood Sir Charles Villiers, the present chairman can and does blame the BSC's state on the three-year recession in world steel demand. Traditionally steel has a fairly reliable five-year demand cycle. A year ago steel demand started rising, if slightly, at least right on cue, but since then it has plummetted and along with it steelmakers' faith in themselves.

American redundancies are running at 1,500 a month and the picture is similar through the EEC and Japan. Last month's world steel conference in Rome could only hinder the spread of dumping and protectionism by calling for voluntary restraint in trading and investment. The crisis has been intensified by the rise of the Third World producers, such as Brazil and Mexico, once major importers. They are making ever larger proportions of the world's steel and perhaps will be adding 100m. tonnes to the globe's total inside ten years. In an industry where every country wants to be an exporter and no one the bridesmaid the Western industrialised nations are at a disadvantage. For example, though the South Koreans refuse to reveal what they pay their workers, they admit that labour costs account for only 7 per cent of total costs against 25 per cent in Japan. The same holds true across the Third World.

With the sense of timing of an epileptic (which you may as well be, if like the BSC, you take Treasury predictions of British growth rates seriously) the Corporation are in the midst of a vast expansion of capacity. Back in 1970, after Melchett and Finniston had visited the giant Japanese steel plants, the two men decided to 'Pearl Harbour' the archaic plant bequeathed by its previous private owners. The development of oxygen steelmaking dramatically enlarged the optimum size of a steelmaking furnace to over 1 million tons and also necessitated the building of coastal works by deepwater harbours capable of handling giant carriers of rich foreign iron-ore. BSC never actually built such plants but started a series of half-hearted imitations with inadequate iron-making facilities on already existent sites. Nevertheless, the fundamental conviction remained; if you wanted to stay in steelmaking you had to be big. In 1971 the BSC had a grandiose plan of producing 43m. tonnes by 1980. By 1975, as the recession persisted, this projection had been sliced to 36m. tonnes by 1982, rising to 38m. by 1985. The latest annual report envisages 30m. tonnes by 1980 an increase of 10m. on the present level. Only the cost has kept on rising. The planners assumed wrongly a buoyant domestic demand and gambled unsuccessfully on winning export markets. But it led the 1973 White Paper, laying out the 10-year-plan to over-concentrate on the quickest road to liquid capacity targets rather than look at the different product areas and then deduce how many and what kind of machines were needed. As long ago as 1970 the BSC's critics were saying they were looking at things from the wrong end. In saying to the Select Committee, 'what we have done increasingly since 1972 is to move from the concept of a coherent iron and steel making policy towards that of a coherent marketing policy', Solomon Gross, the top steel man at the DoI, was admitting to this central error of the BSC.

But with an investment programme of this kind it is alarmingly difficult to change horses in mid-stream. Britain is committed to five large sites. Integrated steelmaking is such a series of interlocked processes that an initial investment decision on one part of the plant must set off a sequence of other decisions in the rest of the plant. There is little point in a plant having a giant BOS converter shorn of a blast furnace capable of feeding it sufficient iron. Some critics are arguing that BSC took advantage of the steel-making process and deliberately imbalanced their pattern of investment, thereby hindering any attempts to cut back the programme without rendering previous investments inefficient. Mike Thomas, one of the MPs on the Select Committee, has described it as 'planting tree stumps'. Only the Ravenscraig and Llanwern works will be balanced out in the near future.

While the BSC has been preparing to storm this illusory expanding market, its share of the domestic market has caved in underneath it. In five years it has fallen from 70 per cent to 55 per cent. In 1974 and 1975 Britain was in the ignominious position of being a net importer of steel as BSC production levels crumbled, while British private steelmakers' share held quite steady. BSC will have trouble edging their way back into lost markets; many of the purchasers require special orders which necessitate long-term commitments to the suppliers. Fords have cut some orders by a third because of BSC's quality, while British Leyland admitted at the same Select Committee meeting, that a third of their steel from BSC failed to arrive on time. A series of technical blow-outs such as at Llanwern partly explain the failure to meet delivery dates and the appalling deterioration in customer relations.

But the major problem has been industrial relations. Under Finniston (who never deigned to meet Bill Sirs, the steel union leader socially) the management had the knack of turning a problem into a crisis. With the workforce already pruned by 20,000 in three years, remarks in 1976 by

Roger Woddis

# Stirring Stuff

Some talk of Alex Kitson,
And some of devotees,
Of Boris Ponomaryov,
And jolly chaps like these;
But of all Brezhnev's brave heroes
There's none he more reveres
Than one with his eyes in blinkers
And fur flaps round his ears.

When Alex was in Moscow,
He praised them to the skies:
'I see no unemployment,
And living standards rise.'
And when he heard that some in camps
Had languished there for years,
He shook his head in sorrow
And brushed away his tears.

Then let us fill our glasses,
And drink to one of those
Who cannot see much further
Than an inch beyond their nose;
And to all the saints who savage him
And shake their angry spears,
With one eye on the media,
And one on their careers.

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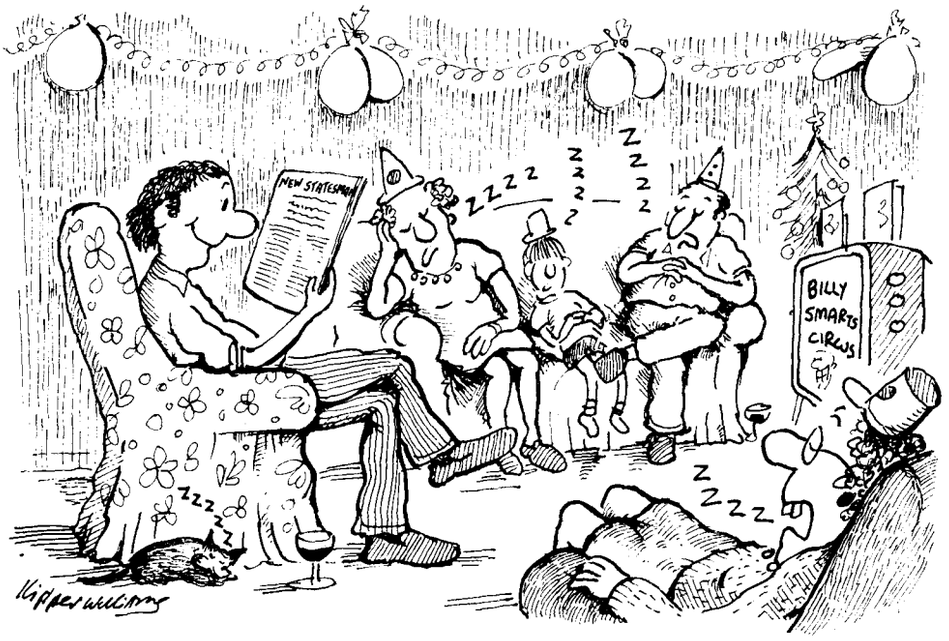
Bob Scholey, the chief executive, that he was looking for another 20,000 in the next two years 'just for starters' hardly reassured the unions. He failed to get anywhere near this target. He also fought and lost a big battle to end the guaranteed week agreement which gave the workforce 80 per cent of their wages regardless of the level of the work load or lay-offs. In the latest crisis talks BSC have seized on the deepening recession as an opportunity to renew their attack on that agreement and the general levels of manning. The Tories in their return to their oldest hunting cry of overmanning, led by William Rees-Mogg's call for productivity increases, have used the BSC as their prime example. The steel unions argue back that comparability studies with Japanese productivity are a lot more intricate than an editor of *The Times* might realise and that, anyway, productivity is a function ultimately of the overall level of demand. By differentiating between recessional overmanning and structural overmanning as well as between employment levels in the new plant and the scattered small old plant due for closure, Sirs is trying to refocus attention on under-capitalisation and the need for international agreements on production levels. But if it is to live with the financial strain of its investment programme and cash limits the BSC see their short-term salvation in cutting labour costs right now. The Labour Party, for its part, has invested too much in protecting the electoral strongholds of the old steel-dependent towns from sudden closure to see that policy ditched at this late stage.

In this genuine dilemma few consider that the concept of public ownership might present a possible escape. The Select Committee asked board members to define the purpose of BSC. Reading some of their flummoxed replies one might have thought they had been asked to recite Pi to the 12th decimal point; others instinctively answered that it was the commercial motive. Prior to renationalisation in 1967 steelworkers campaigned hard for a measure of control of the industry. Ten years later the management's concession to public ownership is one worker representative on the main board and a tiny presence on divisional boards.

Judging by the £200m. recently set aside to index-link white collar pensions or the extraordinarily large number of management salary upgradings, the management's energies have been directed elsewhere. Quite why Sir Charles Villiers, ex-Eton, Guards and Guinness Mahon should have been regarded as the man with the personal or steelmaking expertise to salvage BSC is not clear. But there is one hopeful sign. Prior to the financial takeover and the enforced merger of the 14 companies nationalised in 1967 there had been no British steelmaking firm producing even 3 million tonnes a year. So with nationalisation the scale of decision-making had increased massively. No centralised steelmaking company of comparable size exists anywhere in the world. Villiers to his credit is trying to push the decisions away from a largely non-executive main board and down the company. But latching on to the vogue for decentralisation is not going to be enough. The BSC are trying to press sackings on Sirs politely, but press them they will.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Murray Sayle

# Japan's Miracle Turns Sour

'When the apples are falling,' advises an old Japanese proverb, 'hold out your apron.' Frugal people in a harsh (if deceptively beautiful) land, they have always seen a windfall as something, not to spend, but to put by for the rainy day which can never be far away. Odd man out among industrial nations, unwelcome latecomer to the colonial feast, have-not among the haves, Japan feels herself obliged and entitled to grasp every opportunity that comes along.

Even one so heavily disguised as the Arabs' 1973 oil squeeze, and the world-wide recession which followed, and at first looked like putting Japan Inc. out of business. There was an alarming 2-per-cent *drop* in Japanese GNP in 1974, answered in the only way that Japanese know: tighten belts, subdue internal discords, work harder, export more. To such effect that Japan was soon running huge surpluses: last year, $4,200m. in trade with the European Common Market countries, and, even more embarrassingly, $5,000m. with the US, Japan's patron, protector and promoter in the capitalist world. Some of the smaller countries were practically under Japanese economic seige – 'trade' with Norway, for instance, runs 30-1 in Japan's favour.

The *pattern* of Japanese trade makes her even less welcome at the capitalists' party. Other industrialised countries' imports are about half manufactures (US, 55 per cent, Britain, 52 per cent, West Germany, 55 per cent.) A good slice of these are, of course, Japanese.

But less than 20 per cent of Japanese imports are other peoples' manufactures. The rest is energy and raw materials, for more exports, and even bigger surpluses. Foreign products are welcome in Japan only as rare, overpriced luxuries. To fairly-priced, serviceable foreign manufactures – the kind which Japan is exporting round the world with such suicidal efficiency – the Japanese home market is simply shut tight as a drum. There's no discrimination. *No one* gets in.

Two sample figures from last year's trading returns say it all. Motor-bikes exported from Japan, 2,012,256. Imported into Japan, 919. Refrigerators exported, 7,959,247. Imported, 59,514. The same pattern runs through hi-fi sets, motor cars, radios, TVs and the rest, even down to bicycles – exported, 904,154, imported, 1,638. No wonder Japan's industrialised trading partners are getting, to put it mildly, stroppy.

However, Japan is supposed to be one of the two 'locomotives' that are going to 'pull the Free World out of recession' (the other being West Germany, and they have, indeed, worked more or less in tandem on other occasions). So last May, Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda at the London economic summit promised that Japan would do its bit by stepping up imports and running a $700m. *deficit* on current trading account this year.

Exactly the reverse has happened. Japanese exports zoomed, imports slumped. Even after the Arabs have collected their kilotons of flesh, Japan will still have a *global surplus* to March 1978 of $6,500m. Japan's accumulated reserve is approaching $20,000m. with probably another $10,000m. salted away abroad – enough to meet the severest next turn of the OPEC screw, due at the end of the year.

But it is Japan's trading partners who will be taking the Arab strain. Japan's 1977 trading surplus with the US is likely to exceed $6,000m. and with the Common Market, $5,000m. Britain alone will have to come up with £400m. to pay for this year's unrequited imports from Japan. Meanwhile, two more Japanese motor car manufacturers have announced that they are setting up shop in the UK, to unload on eager British customers the cars they cannot sell at home.

For, in fact, things are not going well in Japan, despite all this passionate exporting. Inexorably, the huge hoard of foreign exchange is pushing up the yen, which last month broke through the magic barrier of 250 to the US dollar, or 450 to the pound – a decade ago, it was 360 to the dollar and 1,000 to the pound. The big, famous Japanese companies can survive and go on exporting, but the small ones, the sub-contractors, the backyard operations you have never heard of, which nevertheless employ half the Japanese labour force, cannot.

Business bankruptcies in Japan are running at all-time record levels. So is unemployment, nearly 2 million out of work – a lot in a country with vestigial social security. More alarmingly, Japanese food is getting tight: rice is more than twice the world price, beef six to eight times, fish is up 30 per cent. The poorest Japanese, men bundled out of a job at 55, youngsters without university education who cannot find unskilled jobs, people the economic miracle has passed by, are starting to show the early, insidious signs of protein deficiency, dull eyes and pinched faces. This is no moment for anyone in Japan to start buying overpriced foreign manufactures. The trade imbalances, in short, can only get worse.

But will they be allowed to? Michael Blumenthal, the US Treasury Secretary, says the yen is still not high enough – Japan is still exporting too much and importing too little. The Americans, it is said, will not be happy until the yen has settled at 230, and it is easy to understand why – the biggest home electronics firm in the US, Zenith, has just announced that it cannot fight the Japanese competition any longer, and is sacking its 5,500 American workers and moving its TV operation to Formosa. US steelmakers are taking the Japanese to court, alleging dumping. There seems to be a general feeling that the Oriental 'locomotive' which was going to haul us out of recession is, in fact, exporting unemployment, reneging on promises and actually making the world economic situation worse.

It is easy to blame Prime Minister Fukuda for this state of affairs, and many people, inside and outside Japan are starting to look critically at the track record of this elderly self-proclaimed 'economical wizard' (financial adviser to a Japanese puppet regime in China, arrested for corruption in the late Forties back in Tokyo, a devious intriguer in the ruling Conservative Party ever since, elevated finally to the premiership by a Japanese variation of Buggins's turn). One hears, even in Tokyo, the old jokes about the world's slimmest volume being the Japanese guide to business ethics.

Roy Jenkins tried a gentlemanly approach in Tokyo earlier this month: a civilised, low-key talk with Fukuda and his cabinet, pointing out that really, this sort of thing couldn't go on indefinitely, *he* understood the problems, but the people back in Brussels were getting impatient, the time had come, etc. The Japanese Government has replied with an 'emergency shopping list' of extra imports – more oil, non-ferrous metal ores, naphtha, uranium ore, military aircraft and large-scale medical equipment; nothing to compete with Japanese industry or agriculture, mostly more raw materials for the export offensive. The Agriculture Ministry offered stepped-up purchases of tomato sauce. In total, less than $1,000m., a fleabite.

It seems, in fact, that Jenkins, Blumenthal and the others have been talking to the wrong people. Except in wartime, Japan has seldom had strong leadership, and the present Japanese cabinet is probably the weakest the country has had since the late Thirties, when the indecisive Prince Konoye floundered and let Japan drift towards alliance with Hitler and the disastrous war.

Fukuda is no militarist – these days, quite the opposite – but his personal factional following is thin, his popularity in the country is low and getting lower, and he is completely dependent on the votes of the rural followers of former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, who is in turn busy defending himself against the Lockheed bribery prosecutors. Meanwhile *Nippon Maru*, or the Good Ship Japan, as Fukuda likes to call his command, is adrift with a weak and squabbling committee on the bridge.

In such circumstances, not uncommon in Japan, it's every powerful group and organised sectional interest for itself, with or against the others. The two most powerful are now in alliance: the bureaucrats of the Ministry of International Trade and

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Industry (MITI) and the massively financed, export-oriented industries which they control, on the one hand, and the Japanese agricultural interests on the other – respectively the most dynamic, and the most corrupt and inefficient (in terms of the cost of food production) elements in Japanese life. Neither group wants any serious competition on the Japanese home market; neither (as long as the present domestic coalition, or rather conspiracy, endures) is likely to get any.

Not altogether from simple selfishness. Very serious mistakes were made, some bureaucrats now privately admit, in the reckless over-equipping of Japanese export industries in the last days of the Great Boom (before October 1973). Nippon Steel, for instance, itself the result of a MITI-directed merger, borrowed $10,000m. on a capital base of $1,000m. (from MITI-'guided' banks, and ultimately from small Japanese savers) for a gigantic steel capacity the world no longer needs, if it ever did.

Sony, the world's most innovative electronics firm, owes $542m., with a massive, life-or-death investment in the proposition that the Western home will now shell out £300 for a Japanese video-tape recorder, to go with their Japanese transistor radio, hi-fi and colour telly.

What does the Japanese consumer get out of this, apart from a shop-window look at a video-tape recorder? In truth, not much. This would seem the moment for Japan to cut her losses in the export field, revive demand at home, and use her surpluses to finance a massive domestic programme of better housing, roads, schools and universities, social welfare and even (for the first time) proper sewage in the big cities. Japan would thus be a happier and healthier country, a welcome partner in the capitalist world, and a better friend, of Roy Jenkins and Michael Blumenthal. In addition, Japanese could eat far better than they do now, for no more effort, or even less. All this, unfortunately, greatly overestimates the flexibility of the Japanese system, or its readiness or capacity to change its fundamental ideas, especially in any sort of socialist direction.

A delegation from New Zealand has just had a bruising encounter with these Japanese realities. Cut off from its best market when Britain joined the EEC, New Zealand is in deep recession, with zero or negative economic growth since 1973. She has just proclaimed a 200-mile fishing zone, which happens to include the last major unexploited continental shelf left on earth with, as a bonus, the world's richest squid fishery (squid is one of the top Japanese delicacies, highly nutritious).

The New Zealand Prime Minister, a blunt, abrasive accountant named Robert Muldoon (who glories in the name 'Piggy') said 'We can't in our economic position, let this go for nothing' and sent his Foreign Minister, a 6ft 4in sheep farmer named, appropriately, Brian Talboys, to Tokyo to offer Japan a special, exclusive deal. New Zealand, Talboys told Prime Minister Fukuda, wanted to 'get together opportunities to sell our products and to fish in our water'. New Zealand was offering beef, butter, cheese and other dairy products at a half to a third of what Japanese consumers are now paying, with plenty of profit for everyone. In return, Japanese trawlers could come and exploit the rich New Zealand fishing grounds, thus improving Japanese diets in two directions at once.

New Zealand, he said, was not asking for any strict reciprocity, no squid pro quo as you might say, just a better chance for everyone in the Japanese market, 'of which we would naturally expect to get a share, with our efficient agriculture' - this is probably over-modest, considering, as a New Zealand diplomat claimed, that 'if lamb chops were military weapons New Zealand would rule the world'

Fukuda listened, nodded and said, 'No'. Just like that. Adding, mysteriously, that the proposal was against Japanese law, and that he was a busy man. In a week of pleading and lecturing minor Japanese officials, that was as far as Talboys got. Nowhere.

A curt, and probably highly significant rebuff. New Zealand, small, broke and desperate, is the first country to have tried approaching Japan, not on the basis of anti-communism, free trade, the Free World, or other cloudy (and from the Japanese viewpoint, highly bankable) abstractions, but on the more concrete ground of mutual self-interest, long-term and freely negotiated. The Japanese were just not interested. Back in New Zealand, Muldoon said he was opening immediate negotiations with the Russians, the South Koreans, and anyone else ready to talk turkey, beef, lamb-chops – and fish But Japan is out, permanently.

What worried the nervous Fukuda was, of course, the element of two-way fair trading involved in the Muldoon offer, even in this case discrimination in favour of Japan. It was too neat, too clear. What would happen if Britain said, very well, Fukuda-Son, a motor-bike for a motor-bike? Japan cannot balance the books with everyone; in fact, she can't balance them with *anyone*, even little New Zealand The Arabs have to be paid, and the big suppliers of Japan's raw materials, notably Canada and Australia, have internal markets too small to absorb enough Japanese imports (even if they wanted to) to pay for the massive deliveries of raw materials which are necessary, in turn, to keep up the export drive, to seize ever greater shares of the world market, to pay for more raw materials, for more exports . . .

So, like the fairy-tale machine under the sea that kept on making salt, the Japanese system grinds on, driven as much as anything by what the present Japanese leadership heard at school 40 and more years ago: that Japan was despised, discriminated against, denied the chance to earn a living, alone in the world, the stranger at the colonialists' feast

No one knows where this will end, or what to do about it, least of all Prime Minister Fukuda. But, today, the apples are falling. Work hard Save Scrimp. And hold out your apron.

*Tokyo*

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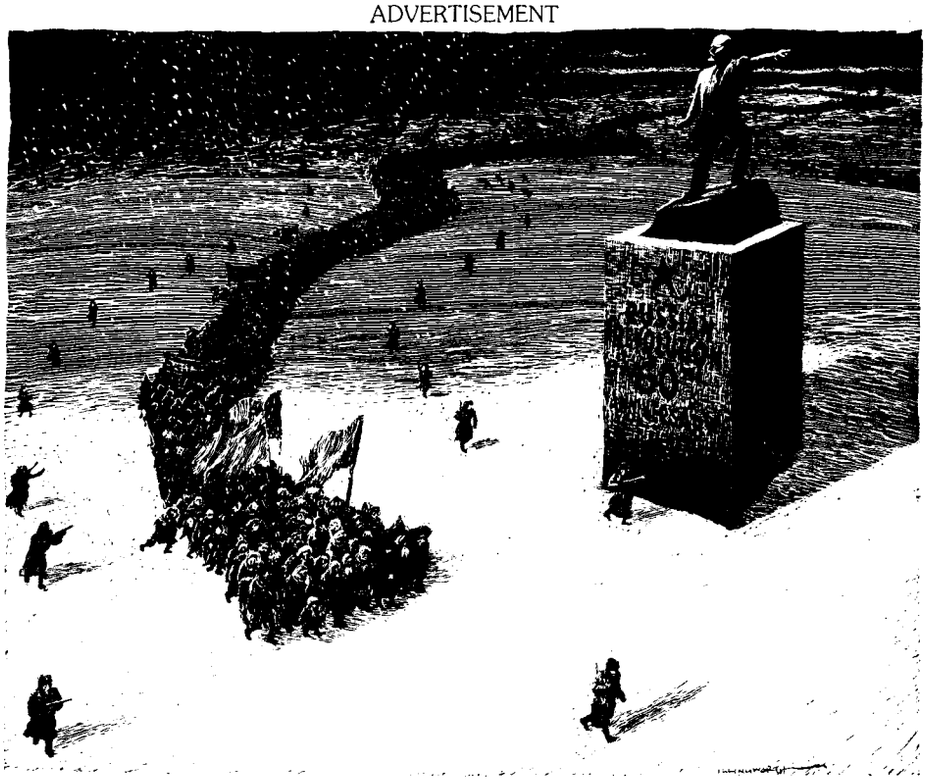

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Denis MacShane*

# Unions and the BBC

The Queen, the 9 o'clock news and the BBC are to the foreigner three unassailable institutions in the British way of life. So when the staff of the latter black out Her Majesty's speech to the Lords and replace the full 25 minutes' worth of Angela Rippon with the potter's wheel slowly revolving it must have seemed that the creation of Sir John Reith had turned itself inside out.

The Association of Broadcasting and Allied Staffs, the union concerned, has stated three main reasons for its action: the size of the overall BBC pay offer – 10 per cent, the way it is distributed amongst BBC employees, and the role of the Government in the negotiations. It is the final point that most worries members of the ABAS executive. To their horror they found BBC management quoting at them letters from the Home Office insisting that the Government be kept informed of all the stages in the pay talks between the BBC and the unions. As one of them put it: 'We might as well talk direct to Merlyn Rees, and the BBC should admit that as far as pay is concerned it is just another government department with no independence whatever.' Coupled with BBC management's reluctant acceptance of a mere 12-month rise in the licence fee, the ABAS feel that such detailed and short-reined Home Office control of BBC money matters brings the Corporation and the Government far too close for comfort.

In a sense the Home Office need not have bothered to show its hand because the BBC management has always been more governmental than the government in rigidly enforcing whatever statutory or voluntary pay policy has been around. They stood firmly by the Heath pay limitations while other broadcasting employers were more flexible and then made up for it all in autumn 1974 with a pay settlement that gave the higher paid BBC staff an increase of up to 40 per cent.

The same has been true for the Healey norms and the BBC management set its face against the kind of creative use of allowances to soften the impact of the £6 and £4 that other employers undertook. Now, of course, many of the BBC's trained staff have voted with their feet and followed the example of top BBC men like Paul Fox, Bryan Cowgill and Peter Pagnamenta by joining ITV and taking the money. The BBC management left behind know all this and share the worry about the departing staff (the most articulate explanation of the need for better pay to keep staff has come from Alastair Hetherington, the BBC's Controller in Scotland) but instead of joining with the ABAS in a joint plea to the Government seem determined to force 10 per cent down the union's throat. The management campaign started with a letter to all staff from Sir Michael Swann, the BBC chairman. Swann's letter was an appeal over the unions direct to the BBC staff to swallow the 10 per cent medicine. It had the opposite effect because, angered by this attempt to short-circuit the normal union-management negotiations, the attitude of the ABAS hardened.

What was worse was the insensitive way the BBC management proposed to share out the overall 10 per cent increase in their total wage bill. Senior BBC executives at the top end of the MP (management and production) grade would get a 15 per cent rise on salaries that were already around the £8,000 a year mark. The percentage increase lessened down the scale, most producers earning about £6,000 a year receiving about 12½ per cent until the very bottom of the BBC pyramid where office cleaners, according to the ABAS, would receive 5 per cent. The bulk of the ABAS's 13,000 members in the BBC would get less than 10 per cent. The BBC management can produce arguments in favour of such unequal distribution, comparisons with outside pay scales and the opportunity for over-time amongst the lower graded staff which is denied to the MP grades. Nonetheless the lack of even-handedness was felt all the more deeply because the management executives making the offer were in the grades that would receive much bigger percentage increases than the vast majority of the staff that was expected to swallow the lower increases.

Alone among all the mass media institutions in Britain the BBC still has nearly half its staff of 25,000 not organised by any union. Its attitude, as with so much in the BBC, goes back to Reith whose feeling towards unions emerged during the general strike when he described BBC news bulletins as impartiality on the side of the government and refused to allow any trade union or Labour speaker on the air during the course of the strike. In his biography of Reith, Andrew Boyle describes Reith's 'instinctive aversion to any form of staff association' and it was not until after Reith's departure in 1938 that a staff association was set up.

Staff association, mind; the BBC was not ready for fully fledged trade unionism and it was not until the 1951 Beveridge Committee on broadcasting instructed the BBC to recognise trade unions that the Corporation reluctantly agreed to do so. To beat off the ETU and the TGWU who were sniffing around at the thought of organising the BBC staff the management came to an agreement with its young staff association so that it suddenly metamorphised into a trade union (it did not, however, join the TUC until 1963) and was given recognition as the appropriate body for all BBC staff.

The history is important because there is always a suspicion when a staff association becomes a trade union with a membership in just one company – the ABAS has a handful of members in ITV and commercial radio but the vast majority are in the BBC – that it can never completely separate itself from its former parent and consequently there may be a touch of the ABAS displaying a trade union *machismo* in some of its industrial action. The ABAS is also locked in difficult merger negotiations with Alan Sapper's militant ACTT and will want to enter the marriage as an equal partner in terms of industrial virility. There's an apocryphal story in BBC circles that when the memberships of the ABAS and ACTT voted to merge, Alan Sapper whose stamping ground hitherto has been ITV was to be seen in the cathedral-like entrance hall of Broadcasting House holding his hands up and saying: 'At last, it's mine. It's mine.' Certainly the politically aggressive Sapper ('It's not that I'm left-wing but everyone else is so far to the right') alarms the BBC brass.

But the ABAS, led by the less political but intellectually extremely able Tees-sider, Tony Hearn, has had plenty of provocation in recent years, thanks to BBC mismanagement of industrial relations. In strict terms the BBC has no formal system of industrial relations, not one that would be recognised by any other large corporation. There are three industrial relations officers to cover 25,000 staff working in hundreds of different units. And they have only an advisory function unlike their *confrères* in other firms who knock heads together and sort out a potential industrial relations blow-up by ordering the local manager to act. In the BBC all power lies with the personnel department whose job it is to interpret and enforce the BBC Staff Instructions, a huge bible with hundreds of detailed instructions on controlling the BBC workforce. Like all good non-productive bureaucrats the BBC's personnel department just grows and grows. The Annan Committee noted without comment that whereas the BBC's total staff had gone up by half between 1962 and 1976 the personnel department had nearly trebled!

The personnel department, under the leadership of its retiring director, Maurice Tinniswood, has insisted on keeping centralised control of all staff-management relations. This has meant that local tiffs between management and unions have not been sorted out locally but instead have needed the heavy-handed intervention of a Broadcasting House personnel department apparatchik, which has nearly always meant laborious meetings that weary the local people involved to the point of permanently worsening industrial relations in the particular area and in some cases to the acute personal distress of an individual BBC employee who can wait for months while the delaying processes work.

Although some BBC managers shelter behind the Staff Instructions and the personnel department many would like a more direct responsibility for managing their staff. A little more authority in the area of pay and posts would work wonders in keeping their staff happy, they say. The demand for decentralised administration was endorsed by a report from a committee under Dick Francis, the BBC's highly successful Controller of Northern Ireland between 1973 and 1977.

*Denis MacShane, a former BBC journalist, was a national NUJ negotiator with the BBC from 1974-77.*

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Although the Francis report was suppressed its author was not banished to some BBC *gulag*. Instead he was promoted to be in charge of BBC news and current affairs and although his masters may hope that he will curb his heretical anti-administration views he has already let it be known among BBC television journalists that he wants to deal with them directly whenever union problems crop up and cut out the Broadcasting House bureaucracy.

A major task for the post-Curran leadership of the BBC will be to shake off the paternalistic style that is at the root of the current confrontation over pay. The ABAS and the other unions complain that the BBC idea of consultation is to invite them along to take notes of what the BBC management has decided to do in any event. As Tim Fell, the NUJ's broadcasting organiser, puts it: 'The BBC offer the union their preferred solution to the problem rather than sitting down jointly and working out a common answer.' Equally irritating to the unions was the BBC management refusal to bargain collectively on a whole package of pay and related benefits. This year to try and soften the 10 per cent limit the NUJ wanted to discuss improvement in fringe allowances and benefits in the annual pay talks. At first the idea was dismissed by the personnel department and the bland refusal even to consider the demands considerably increased ill-will amongst the BBC journalists.

In the last eight years the BBC has been hit by several major strikes. A one-day affair in 1969, a long strike by production assistants in 1974, a 24-hour stoppage by journalists in 1975 that took BBC news off the air for the first time in its history and now the latest walk-outs. In addition there have been several strikes by smaller groups of staff that have received little publicity. The strikes have always been official, always after a grievance has been tolerated for a long while and endless procedures gone through. The BBC's new personnel director, Michael Bett, a youthful 42-year-old, will be expected to put things right. He comes from being personnel director of Sir Arnold Weinstock's GEC. It remains to be seen if his job will be to forge a modern relationship with the BBC unions, including the new powerful ABAS-ACTT twin, or just to maintain the existing paternalistic tradition with a sharper anti-union edge.

The BBC that Reith created managed to get through its first 50 years with only one bit of significant industrial action. Since its 50th birthday in 1972 there is not a single department of the BBC, drama, news, local radio, messengers, engineering that has not gone through the experience of industrial action. The management style of the 1950s was fatal in the 1970s. None of the BBC unions enjoys industrial action but as the tail-coated cameramen in the House of Lords showed, when they politely but defiantly walked out on the Queen, the BBC style of managing its staff is scarcely an advertisement for Britain.

**Roger Omond**

# The Biko Inquest

'Biko Lives' a slogan-painter daubed defiantly on a National Party election office last week. But he doesn't: the father of Black Consciousness in South Africa has been dead for two months. Next Monday an inquest court will begin to try to discover how Steve Biko came to die in a Pretoria prison cell.

There is no guarantee that it will. There have been inquests into detention deaths before and often their findings have left more questions unanswered than answered. Earlier this year, for example, the inquest into the death in detention of one of Biko's closest aide, Mapetla Mohapi, left unanswered the questions of why a fit young man who was apparently cooperating with the Special Branch had suddenly decided to hang himself with his own jeans and why he left a 'suicide note' addressed not to the wife he adored but to his interrogator. This inquest may be different, though. The Biko family will be represented by three of South Africa's leading, and most expensive, advocates; newspaper investigations have been unusually extensive so that anybody who might have tried a cover-up has been foiled in advance; and international attention demands that every aspect of Biko's last 25 days when he was in Special Branch detention be explored.

The inquest could lead to prosecutions if the court finds foul play, despite the fact that two Attorney-Generals decided last month that, on the basis of information before them, there were no grounds for anybody to be charged. But Pretoria's Chief Magistrate, N. J. Prins, who will preside over the inquiry, said on 27 October – when the inquest had a brief, formal opening – that Biko's death was not due to natural causes. It will be up to the court to discover just what was unnatural about the death and to discover who, if anybody, was responsible. Then the inquest papers will go to the Attorney-General who may prosecute.

Any prosecutions are far in the future. First, the court has to explore the circumstances surrounding Biko's lonely and jolting death. And that could be difficult. The only people who really know are the Special Branch. Even Police Minister Kruger gave the impression when Biko's death was first announced on 13 September that he was not too well acquainted with what had happened. Neither Kruger nor the Special Branch can be looking forward to the inquest. The multiplicity of statements made after the death will be under expert legal scrutiny. For example, Kruger's first statement said Biko had begun a hunger strike and thirst strike on 5 September after being detained on 18 August. 'By Sunday (11 September) Mr Biko had still not eaten and appeared to be unwell', Mr Kruger said: '. . . He was taken to Pretoria the same night. On 12 September Mr Biko was again examined and medically treated by the district surgeon in Pretoria. He died the same night.' Not unnaturally this was universally interpreted as Kruger having said the hunger and thirst strike was the cause of death. Kruger let that impression stand as newspapers throughout the country and abroad reflected that interpretation while a few questioned whether a fit and healthy man would actually die after a mere eight-day hunger strike. Three days later Kruger went on state-controlled TV to deny that he had said it was the cause of death.

It was also a day or so after his first statement that Kruger said for the first time that Biko had been fed intravenously: 'Some sort of feed . . . a drip . . . I am not a medical man' was the way he put it. Why the delay in revealing this information? Kruger didn't say. Nor did Kruger react to a statement by a doctor that an intravenous drip could keep a man on a hunger strike alive for weeks. What Kruger had said in the heat of the moment, to put it charitably, at the Transvaal National Party Congress a few days before was that he agreed with a delegate who said it was a detainee's democratic right to starve himself to death.

But by the Friday after Biko's death, the hunger strike theory was in tatters. Since then little has been heard about it. What we *have* heard are apparently well-substantiated reports of brain damage consistent with impact on the forehead and damage to the rib-cage. A few weeks ago Kruger said he did not believe his police had done any wrong but added for the first time there might have been a struggle: 'I can accept that you can get into a struggle with a man that you have got to handcuff or subdue or something and that something can happen to him.' Just what that 'something' was will be eagerly awaited as the inquest begins its sitting in the Old Synagogue in Pretoria.

A number of other questions also have to be answered in the Old Synagogue. Could doctors find nothing physically wrong with a man who is said to have been on hunger strike for a week? How was this apparently seriously-ill man taken 500 miles from Port Elizabeth (where he was being detained) to Pretoria (where he died)? Why was he not admitted to a Pretoria prison hospital but allowed to die alone in a prison cell? Who were his interrogators and how was he interrogated? Is Peter Jones, the man detained with him and who is still in detention now, in a position to shed any light on the interrogation? Why, if the police had a *prime facie* case against Biko as Kruger claimed, was he not immediately charged? Why was he not allowed access to his own doctor? Why was his family not told he was unwell? Why did the police tell Biko's mother at 8.30 a.m. on 13 September that her son was fine and return a mere 30 minutes later to say he was dead?

There may be more questions than answers at the inquest.

*East London*

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# London Diary

☐ I have this curious feeling that I have known Princess Anne's new baby for at least 17 years. This is obviously impossible as the child is as I write yet unborn. In fact it is due on Monday, only two days before England are knocked out of the World Cup by Italy, and the politicians will doubtless be hoping that we shall all be so agog with the thoughts of one more Royal in our midst that we won't take to the streets and burn the Football Association headquarters. Be that as it may, I still feel an old friend of the unborn babe. This is mainly to do with my reading habits which involve a morning session with the *Daily Mirror*. Now, I am a longstanding *Mirror* fan but I must say it has started drooling, not to say frothing at the mouth, about Anne's baby. Before it is born, I know that it will have a nanny called Mabel Anderson and will live in a nursery with one white wall where the infant will be allowed to produce his first graffiti. The *Mirror* also tells me that the grandparents, Major and and Mrs Phillips, will be encouraged to look after the infant by Princess Anne deliberately 'messing up' the staff rota and ringing her in-laws in a neatly contrived panic asking them to look after junior while she and Mark go off on a three-day event or somesuch.

☐ Who cares? As a *Mirror* reader I don't. I simply want to throw up at all the yuk. As I imagine do the couple in question. One interesting sidelight to it all, however. On the day that the *Mirror* devoted its centre page spread to its 'all-the-facts-you-never-wanted-to-know-about-the-new-infant' story it splashed on page one the news that Princess Anne was having a swimming pool built for her horses at her new home at Gatcombe Park in Gloucestershire. The cost, according to the *Mirror* was £100,000. A good story and, if true, yet another example of the insensitivity shown by the Royals and, perhaps more particularly, their advisers, in allowing such expensive fripperies at a time when most people are helping the country by accepting the Government's offer of 10 per cent of sweet f.a. Yet, on the inside pages, in the aforementioned story, we were assured that the new baby will be put into second-hand nappies, the ones used by Prince Edward 14 years ago. According to the story: 'The Royal Family may be worth millions but, when it comes to thrift, there's no one to touch them.' Come back Crawfie, all is forgiven.

☐ Still on the subject of royalty, I was reminded this week of the time I once played a king on stage. It was a long time ago – at my junior school to be exact – and I played Percy, the King of Hearts, in the school production of the same name. The play was remarkable only because of one line I had to deliver to my Queen at the end of Act One when, during the course of a domestic tiff, I said to her: 'I've had enough, I'm taking my tart upstairs and having it in bed.' It brought the house down and it was some time before my parents thought me mature enough to be told the reason why. However, that was the nearest I ever came to living in a palace or building a swimming pool for my horses.

☐ It has always seemed to me that the trouble with our Royal Family has been the distance it places between itself and its public. Again, I am sure that this has more to do with the intervention of 'advisers' than any intention of the Queen and company, but there is no doubt whatever that the gap places an intolerable strain on both Royals and commoners on the rare occasions they meet. In the course of my life I have been introduced to four members of the Royal Family and, with the exception of Prince Charles, found the meetings intolerably stiff and awkward, like a confrontation between two speak-your-weight machines. The trick, of course, is to be as natural as possible but that's difficult if you observe the protocol of only speaking when you are spoken to. The fact is that sometimes the Royal in question just ignores you. I remember doing a charity concert at which Princess Margaret was the guest, myself the introducer and John Wilbraham the soloist playing Haydn's *Trumpet Concerto*. At the interval, after Wilbraham had played quite beautifully, we were introduced to the Princess. She said nothing to me and appeared to be doing the same to John Wilbraham who being a big man – he would make a marvellous prop forward – and also fresh from his exertions with Haydn, was beginning to sweat profusely. After a while of leg hopping and shuffling on our parts, Princess Margaret appeared to notice John Wilbraham for the first time. 'Does trumpet playing tire you?', she asked sweetly. 'It makes me sweat just thinking about it,' said John. 'Really,' she said, and turned away leaving us standing there like gate posts. 'It was something you said,' I told John, just to worry him for the second half of the concert.

☐ One virtue of being a Royal would be that I would never again have to eat in a motorway caff. For a long time now I have seethed and raged at the frankly appalling and disgusting food served at these establishments. On the Continent and in America, their equivalents invariably offer good food in pleasant surroundings at a decent price. In Britain, taking a meal on the motorway is often more hazardous than driving on it. I have long since advocated a boycott of these lousy caffs and I am glad to see that Mr Egon Ronay lends his support to the notion by lambasting the motorway services in the latest edition of his *Guide to British Eating* and, moreover, suggesting for each motorway pleasant alternative eating establishments within a few minutes of junctions.

☐ At the other end of the eating experience Mr Ronay singles out for mention the restaurants where it costs an arm and a leg – somewhere in the region of £20 per person – to get a meal. He wonders who can afford to eat in these places. Well, the answer is the people who have always been able to afford one man's living wages for a lunch – film people, who notoriously have more money than sense, expense account businessmen and wealthy foreigners. I see them streaming into my village at the weekend to eat at a restaurant where a Dover sole costs £8 and you can reckon on paying about £30 for two providing neither goes mad on the booze. Ninety people had lunch there on Sunday and the same number had dinner on Saturday and I'll bet none of them managed to keep the cost to the notional minimum, nor, I imagine, did any of them try. However instead of pressing our noses against the window-panes while the other half eats, we should be getting on with the business of eating twice as well as they do for nothing like the price. What Mr Ronay should attempt next year in his excellent publication is a survey of that great British institution, namely the fish and chip shop. The investigations should cover all manner of information such as whether the proprietor cooks in oil or dripping (apart from having a profound difference on the state of the finished article it also has other implications as a kosher taxi driver pointed out to me the other day).

☐ I have another suggestion, altogether more drastic. For some time now motorway caffs have been the meeting place for bands of marauding soccer fans taking a bus trip to see their teams play. Whenever two of these gangs have accidentally met, the caff has become a battle-ground and the police have had to move in and sort things out. Now it would help everyone considerably if we could *encourage* these soccer fans to have their punch-ups at the motorway caffs before or after the games. This would bring back soccer's missing millions who would once more be able to go to a game without fear of getting punched or having some slack-mouthed yobbo yelling obscenities at the referee. The police should declare the motorway caffs a no-go area and let the slobs slug it out among themselves. The beauty of my scheme is that there will be no survivors because if the hooligans don't get each other the catering most assuredly will account for the lot of them.

**Michael Parkinson**

# This England

**Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.**

☐ A Stoke city councillor, Mr Richard Bullock, awakened by a noise outside his window, jumped out of bed and chased two runaway horses for a quarter of a mile before lassooing them with a clothes line on Saturday. – *Daily Telegraph* (J. Gorman)

☐ New petrol pumps at a garage in Oxford were blessed and sprinkled with holy water yesterday by Father Peter Mayhew, chaplain to All Saints Convent, Leopold Street, who then became the first customer to use them. – *Daily Telegraph* (W. Pugh)

☐ Fireman at Barnsley were in trouble when factory inspectors paid them a visit. For their showpiece headquarters lacked a vital piece of equipment – a fire escape. Now the fire service is having to enforce a notice against itself to put things right. – *Daily Express* (Peter Davies)

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# University Forum

Clive Wolman*

# In Between the Fighting

David Ben-Gurion once remarked that every Israeli worker was in reality a soldier on ten or 11 months annual leave. He might have added that every Israeli student was in reality a worker (as well as a soldier) on a few hours daily leave. The glossy Tel-Aviv University brochure sums up his position bluntly: 'Like his colleagues in other Israeli Universities, the Tel-Aviv University student means business and has little time or energy for non-conformist exuberance.'

At the age of 18, before going to university, every Israeli male must do at least three continuous years of gruelling army service (females do two). Most of the present generation of Israeli students fought in the Yom Kippur War: all of those saw friends and contemporaries killed in its course. But, even after such hardships as these, army service is not over; all male students are called up for annual reserve duty, often in the middle of the university term, sometimes even in the middle of the night. Often lacking grants for tuition fees or maintenance, the average Israeli student is forced to follow a triple or quadruple existence, earning a living, fighting, running a household (very often) and, when he can, studying. But this life-style is not conducive to radical forms of protest. The (non-sabbatical) leaders of the national students' union come overwhelmingly from the ranks of Menachem Begin's Likud party, as do those of most of the individual university unions. As all British Tories know, the extremists always dominate student politics. In Israel, the silent majority are particularly silent.

Israel must be the only country in the world where the academic staff are consistently less conformist and more liberal, cosmopolitan and politicised than the students. In Britain, the headline, STUDENT LEADER CALLS FOR EXECUTION OF 'TREASONABLE AND SUBVERSIVE' PROFESSOR, would probably be put in the same category as MAN BITES DOG. But not in Israel, where television viewers once had the pleasure of seeing thus condemned Professor Israel Shahak of the Hebrew University, a very ostentatious and intemperate critic of the Zionist state. A completely disproportionate share of the left-wing vote comes from the academic world and most Israelis regard the peace movement as the exclusive province of rather eccentric intellectuals. The Anglo-Saxon influence is also very apparent: nearly 90 per cent of the books chosen for the libraries (including an impressive selection of virulently anti-Zionist literature) are in English and the faculty studies resound to the drawls of imported American professors.

There is one group of students whose radicalism is not overshadowed by that of the academics: the 1,400 'minority students' (i.e. Arabs). Israel's 500,000 strong Arab community live very much apart from the Jewish population. For obvious reasons, the Arabs are excused military service; and so, one might expect the main point of any contact between the two peoples to be in the liberal atmosphere of a university – perhaps the only such place in all the Middle East. Unfortunately, however, the polarisation at university is even greater than in the rest of the country. Distrust and bitterness prevail in both camps – and, at the Hebrew University, the hostility has even erupted into stone-throwing battles. The president of the Haifa University student union, an 'apolitical' figure, summed up a very common attitude: 'The Arabs cannot be denied a higher education but there is no doubt that, given the chance, they would stick a knife in our backs. Most support – perhaps even actively – the PLO terrorists. They simply cannot be trusted.' I was to hear this view – and similar ones on the entire Middle East conflict – repeated frequently, particularly by the growing number of Oriental Jewish students. To the accusation that their attitude is bigoted and, possibly, self-fulfilling, they will retort: 'You liberals are always over-eager to force Arab behaviour into the straitjacket of your own Western sociological concepts.' Nevertheless, the major grievances of, at least, Israeli Arabs can hardly be a peculiar product of an 'authoritarian, Islamic, desert tribal culture'.

For example, Oriental Jews are often admitted to university with inferior matriculation exam results and offered a six-month pre-academic preparatory course; the funding for this programme (including maintenance) is provided by independent Jewish organisations. But Arab students, whose school educational standards have been even lower, who have to use two foreign languages, Hebrew and English, and who are also admitted with inferior examination records, are denied the same benefits. Consequently, they often do very badly in their first university year and the drop-out rate is extremely high. Their resentment is increased by the great difficulties they have in finding rented accommodation in Jewish towns and by the lack of employment available for them in all the professions other than teaching.

The school education that the Arabs receive is uniquely liberal (by Middle East standards), for they learn extensively about the history and culture of the 'enemy'. This is reflected in a rather confused outlook. Their denunciations of 'Zionist racism' are often prefaced with such classic remarks as 'Many of my best friends are Jews,' and they make a conscious attempt to moderate their tone. Nevertheless, their critique of Israel and all its works remains bitter and hateful; many of them hope for another war and a decisive Israeli defeat.

There are some Arab students – particularly the Bedouin and Druze – who seem quite content with their position, dislike talking politics and strive to become fully integrated into Israeli society. But in recent years, their relative strength has been declining rapidly. In the Knesset elections in May, two-thirds of the Arab students voted for Rakah, the Communist Party. The fact that many of their friends amongst the Israeli Arab population are students in Eastern Europe or the USSR, where they are treated exceptionally well, enhances the attraction of this the most Stalinist of all Western CPs. But a growing number of students regard Rakah as too moderate in that they support the continued existence of Israel. The election of Menachem Begin is regarded with contemptuous indifference by most of the Arabs. As one told me: 'He only says openly what the past Israeli leaders have been trying to do quietly for the last ten years.' But his policies will certainly reinforce the polarisation of the student body and, as the Jewish religious militants also gather strength, a bloody campus confrontation may soon occur.

Many Jewish students see the dangers in the present situation but most do not have the time or energy to seek out a close dialogue with the Arabs – save a small number of leftish students. Some of these have great faith that peace will ultimately come to the area; most are deeply pessimistic and very alienated from Israeli society. Few however have joined the ultra-left groups which, in Israel, are minuscule even by ultra-Left standards. Despite their numerical weakness, these Jewish students often assume the leadership in organisations and campaigns supported overwhelmingly by Arabs. They suffer less interference from the authorities and have more influence amongst the generally tolerant, if not sympathetic, Jewish students.

But there are limits: I once attended a student political meeting in Beersheva where a religious militant made a long invective against the barbarous Arab treatment of Israeli prisoners of war. One Jewish medical student stood up and replied that, while he had been serving as a medical orderly on the Sinai front in the 1973 war, he had seen Israeli soldiers beating to death some captured Arabs. This statement threw the meeting into turmoil, the speaker being saved only by the timely intervention of the police. They took his name and address and, a few days later, he was called to Army HQ and threatened with a court martial.

More than anything else, this incident brought home the omnipresent effects of continual war. In more ways than one, Israeli student life is both a product and a reflection of a conflict that, after 57 years, is probably the longest-running, and most expensive, show on the world's stage. Its internal consequences could demonstrably be far worse: across the barbed wire and mine-fields that mark the border, the youth of the ghettoised, persecuted Syrian Jewish community are actually prevented from entering both higher, and state secondary, education. But, Israeli Arab students do not find this much consolation.

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# First Person

**Arthur Marshall**

# Swing Swing Together

A hundred and fifty or so years ago, a public school headmaster busily concocting one of those fraudulently misleading school prospectuses – 'extensive grounds, bathing in "Splosher", tradition-soaked buildings, intellectual and other disciplines inculcated, fine "tone", resident matron, food' – complete with photographs of falsely smiling inmates ('a cheery group on Big Side celebrating "Cuppers" '), would naturally have suppressed what was then one of the very few advantages of four profitless and dangerous years at a boarding school, namely, that it made the whole of the rest of existence thereafter seem by comparison like a prolonged and pleasurable picnic.

A cross-section of experiences of public school life down the centuries leaves one gasping. Ferocious beatings (Winchester thoughtfully experimented with stout apple branches bound together in a two foot holder, but came back in the end to good old birch), up at 5 a.m., Latin and Greek until midday and then a meal of watery gruel and currants (Merchant Taylors' provided no midday food at all until 1870), devilish bullying, 20 days' holiday a year, solitary confinement as a punishment (Christ's Hospital and Mill Hill), headmasters who were wild figures and as ruthless and powerful as Hitler (early ones had the power to excommunicate) and a staff whom the Felsted statutes thought it prudent to specify should not be 'drunkards or whore-hunters'. Dulwich took boarders at the age of four and at Eton the collegers competed for their food with regiments of rats. So much for the *de luxe* view, held by some, of these 'young toffs' ' establishments.

Fifty years ago, conditions had greatly improved and at Oundle I was extremely happy, despite the surprising ups and downs of school life. I was in what was called a 'proprietary' house (the housemaster, conscience-stricken or not, made what profit he could) where we sometimes found ourselves at suppertime staring, ravenous and bemused, at a solitary pilchard perched on a cabbage leaf masquerading as lettuce. For the first two years not a day passed without a Latin lesson and the boredom that went with it. If you were in bad trouble or very unhappy, there was nobody to whom you could conceivably have gone for help, least of all the housemaster (it was then fashionable for them to be entirely remote and unapproachable). If you had explained that you didn't really like rugger or cricket all that much and didn't want to take part and would therefore gladly yield up your place to another, gaining thereby good marks for unselfishness, you would have been instantly thrashed and given a tremendous lecture on 'letting down the house'. Indeed, so geared was I to taking daily exercise in a sort of automaton trance that, on going up to Cambridge I assumed that we all had to play *something* and enrolled myself for hockey. Ribald friends, mocking my post-lunch bicyclings, all kitted up and ready for the fray, down the Huntingdon road, soon put me wise to the fact that exercise and, to a very slightly lesser degree, work, were quite unnecessary and I sawed up and burnt my hockey stick on the fire in my rooms; it made a very disagreeable smell.

The vast past history of public schools, a weird and wonderful phantasmagoria if ever there was one, is now fully and inexhaustibly revealed to us for the first time by Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy (Bryanston and Cambridge) in his *The Public School Phenomenon*, a copy of which, excellently illustrated, Messrs Hodder and Stoughton (say it, apparently, Storton) will cheerfully let you have for £7.50 and which really covers everything. Our author, equipped, and how essentially, with a splendid sense of humour, is particularly strong on just those details that fascinate, and especially on the eccentrics whom such schools have always gathered to their bosoms.

For example, Gill of St Paul's used to rush out and beat old boys who had come down to see the dear old place again, and beat too any passer-by who irritated him. Moss of Shrewsbury found games quite incomprehensible and at football matches used to ask what time stumps were to be drawn. Bradley of Marlborough raced pigeons, often pressing a basket of them on to visitors leaving by train with a request that they open the carriage window and release the birds at Didcot. Braythwaite of Lancing had a belch so violent that it blew his hand away from his mouth when he could get it there in time. The 1742 headmaster of Sedbergh disliked both boys and schools to such an extent that he spent his entire tenure of office firmly locked in his study. The 1818 headmaster of Bromsgrove, on the other hand, liked a more open life and spent nine consecutive days in a public house (asked to leave both the pub and the school). Temple of Rugby sobbed loudly while flogging, a doubly unnerving experience for the floggee. Percival of Clifton insisted on breeches for footer, fearful that the boys might find the sight of each other's knees too unbearably disturbing. Udall, headmaster of Eton until imprisoned for the gravest of sexual misdemeanours, popped up again on his release from choky as headmaster of Westminster in what must have been perhaps a rather lean year. Benson of Wellington climbed about festooning the tops of the dormitory cubicles with barbed wire to discourage informal visiting after lights-out.

Literary figures haven't always made too good a showing at their public schools. Our delightful poet laureate was in ceaseless trouble at Marlborough. L. P. Hartley was 'whopped' at Harrow for leaning too far out of a window on a Sunday. Harold Nicolson found at Wellington that intellectual powers were considered to be in some way effeminate. At Malvern, our much revered ex-literary editor, Raymond Mortimer, happily still a robust 82, was rated a duffer at games and suspended upside down over an unflushed lavatory bowl (if the culprits are still alive, look out!). Cyril Connolly was given at Eton a beating by the self-elected bloods, an alarmingly powerful super-prefectorial body answerable, apparently, to nobody. Indeed, a feature of the last century (and perhaps of this) is the ease with which masters allowed senior boys to take over the running of the place. At Marlborough, a housemaster was outraged at being disturbed by a prefect who came to announce that the building was on fire ('That's your department!').

Turning Mr Gathorne-Hardy's packed and enthralling pages (478 of them. There's value for you), one can almost smell the damp towels, the soggy socks, the changing room, the doorless lavatories, the prophylactic aroma of Matron's 'den', the scent of cigars and rich foods beyond the baize door that led to more luxurious quarters, and the unforgettable, unforgotten whiff of cabbage cooked without the hand of love.

By no means all boys conformed or stood the pace and there were some brave enough to stage rebellions. Glorious uprisings took place at Eton (harsh conditions: flogging block smashed), Harrow (led by Byron: gunpowder used for the first time), Rugby (for 'Rights of Boys': army brought out), Sherborne (meat gone putrid: all prefects expelled), Marlborough (all privileges removed: fireworks ingeniously used as weapons and damages running into thousands). A very remarkable 15-year-old called Esmond Romilly (a snap of the period shows a finely belligerent face), ran away from Wellington, established himself in London, issued a fiery revolutionary magazine called 'Out of Bounds' and called for representatives from other public schools to voice their grievances. In no time at all, delegates played truant and courageously turned up – Ledward of Charterhouse, Pilkington of Lancing and, another splendid literary person, Philip Toynbee of Rugby, subsequently sacked but with a glowing testimonial for initiative, The revolt fizzled out, but it was a spirited affair while it lasted.

But what, you will be asking, of more serious matters? The progress, if such it was, of the progressive schools. The influence, if any, of public schools today. The enigma, in the face of violent opposition from some quarters and the almost unpayable fees, of their increased popularity, with most of them currently rebuilding and adding and embellishing and all of them jammed to the doors, with waiting lists a mile long. What, above all, about girls schools, now and down the ages? Patience. More next week.

# This South Africa

☐ The theme 'Freedom of the Press' has been chosen as one of next year's special issues of South African stamps, it was announced yesterday. – *Sunday Times* (H. Welham)

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# Letters to the Editor

## Doctors and Diseases

*Sir,* Donald Gould's criticisms of the National Health Service (NS 28 October) must be taken seriously but such views are by now familiar to most doctors and have recently been discussed in some depth by the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Douglas Black, in his recent address '*Cui bono*' (*BMJ* 29 October).

As one who has been a strong supporter of the NHS since its inception, I am concerned by the attacks upon it by Left and Right and fearful that one of the great social achievements of our time may become mutilated beyond recognition, either by those who think it superfluous or by those who wish to further the interests of private medicine. What seems to be forgotten is that the essence of clinical medicine is the appeal by a person who is diseased to another who he believes has special skill or experience to help him. It is an individual appeal. It is immediate. So it was millenia ago, so it is now. The NHS, imperfect though it is, is an attempt to give everyone in the community this facility. Its destruction would cause misery to many.

Knocking the doctor is nothing new. As an Elizabethan poet put it:

God and the Doctor we both alike adore
When on the brink of danger, not before.
The danger o'er, both are alike requited
God is forgotten and the Doctor slighted.

A. L. WYMAN

*65 Nassau Road*
*London SW13*

*Sir,* I accept wholeheartedly Donald Gould's analysis (NS 28 October) of the fundamental change needed in our approach to health care. His pessimism about the cooperation likely to be found amongst the politicians, the doctors and the unions is also justified.

If he really believes what he says, however, he ought to be looking far more urgently for allies. His final paragraph, no doubt intended to hold out a small ray of hope, carries no conviction whatever. What he might have said was that there are now throughout the country groups of lay people committed to a critical study of health services. I refer, of course, to Community (in Scotland 'Local') Health Councils. Given some encouragement in place of the current chorus of disparagement, these councils, which have succeeded in becoming an irritant grit in the NHS oyster, might well grow just the pearls of wisdom that Donald Gould is looking for in the body politic. Their instincts in most cases tell them that Gould is right. So too do the plaintive cries they hear from the community medical services and the health educationists. But they are too easily put down by the strident voices of the consultants in prestige specialties and the hospital-orientated health authorities and their senior administrators. If people were encouraged to look to CHCs to lead a campaign for sense in medical policy they might just justify their existence.

MICHAEL QUINTON
*Community Health Council Secretary*
*236 Park Lane*
*Frampton Cotterell*
*Bristol*

*Sir,* The matter over which Donald Gould is concerned has little to do with the NHS, and it was misleading of you to present it as such on the front-page. The questions he seems to be asking are concerned with medical practice all over the West – not just in NHS-conscious Britain – indeed, he said as much in his little parable of the Canadian non-welfare state system.

Although his assessment of the ills of current medical practice may be tenable, his implication of the NHS as the prime guilty party was underhand and unsubstantiated.

BARBARA CROSSLEY

*4 Maudland Road*
*Blackpool*

## Hoggart's Reply

*Sir,* Martin Shaw's letter (NS 4 November) about the Gould report does not make a straight response to any one of the points I made – in an essay which was, if nothing else, at least measured and carefully phrased.

Instead, his letter contained misreading, faulty extension, partial quotation, blurring elision, evasion of the more difficult points, linguistic trickinesses and rather threatening emotive rhetoric.

What he has done, and I regret this very much indeed both as an academic and as a socialist, is to give Professor Gould yet another piece of evidence for his Black Book of certain debating malpractices.

RICHARD HOGGART
*Warden*

*Goldsmiths' College*
*Lewisham Way*
*London SE14*

## Parkinson's Hero

*Sir,* Michael Parkinson in his one-sided eulogy of Geoff Boycott (London Diary, 4 November) totally justifies E. W. Swanton's stricture that Parkinson 'is guaranteed to glorify anyone and anything who comes from his own small corner of the world and to denigrate almost all else'. Parkinson fails to mention that Boycott, whose batting has always been suspect against genuine pace, declined to play for his country when Lillee and Thomson were bowling for Australia and when Holding, Roberts and Daniel were bowling for West Indies. A year ago he offered to return against the gentle spin of the Indians. Parkinson also fails to record that of the 13 players who have captained Yorkshire for more than one season, in the last 95 years, Boycott alone has failed to win the championship. Nor has he won any of the one day competitions. Most of us have at some time in our lives said 'Shan't play unless I'm captain', but unlike Mr Boycott, few of us have continued to say it after we have reached the age of ten.

FINDLAY REA.

*Weald Cottage*
*Weald*
*Sevenoaks, Kent*

## A Tale of Scottish TV

*Sir,* William Brown defends (Letters 4 November) the present coverage of current affairs and documentary programmes on Scottish Television, and gives confident assurances of further improvements when the time given to them is doubled in the next 12 months. What he is unable to do, I am afraid, is to give similar assurances for programmes which Annan described as 'enriching peoples conception of life', for it is not possible to double something that isn't there. There is no equivalent at STV of the Music and Art Department at BBC Scotland, and the few programmes that are transmitted frequently take the form of inept commentaries at gala performances. I find it difficult to remember any STV programmes in recent weeks, or even months, in which interesting Scottish writers, dramatists, or film makers have been given the opportunity to show in a creative way how Scottish people live and work. Instead we are promised at astronomical cost *The Pride of Miss Jean Brodie* in serial form this time as a change from the book, the play, and the film.

One accepts that most of the attention will always be directed to keeping programmes of 'light entertainment, serials, sport, and consumer affairs' in the 'area's Top Ten'. It is, however, not too much to ask that there should be one, or perhaps even two, programmes each week which will deal with Scotland's contribution to the life and culture of the UK, and that these should be of sufficiently high quality to be broadcast on the ITV network.

TOM ALEXANDER

*Harar*
*Brodick*
*Isle of Arran*

## The Northampton Story

*Sir,* Ms Colquhoun's 'Northampton Story' (NS 21 October) contains a number of misleading statements and, as secretary of Northampton North Constituency Labour Party, I feel I must reply to it.

It is true that Ms Colquhoun democratically accepted the decision of party members in her choice of who should lead the Parliamentary Labour Party, and earned their approbation for this. However, she promised at her election to come and live in Northampton if elected; but it is barely a year ago that she set up a *pied-à-terre* here. The GMC welcomed her establishing meetings for party members, but objected to her making statements after these informal meetings as though official policy decisions had been made. They also deplored the fact that these meetings were held at the expense of her surgeries. Her failure to hold her surgeries regularly has been a sore point with party members for the past three years.

Ms Colquhoun's figures of the voting at the Park Ward branch meeting are incorrect. I gave her the correct figures at her request, but she did not accept my word and proceeded to express her doubts on the validity of the proceedings and the vote in the press. These proceedings were accepted by the EC as valid. I do not believe that anyone present at the branch meeting spoke of it outside. There were, however, rumours going round that a resolu-

**A WINDOW ON SOWETO by Joyce Sikakane,** is a personal account of living in South Africa's largest township, and documents the historical and social background to this experience.

'The best book I have ever read about South Africa. The book costs 80p, it is worth a great deal more'. *Irish Times*

'She should be widely read for this is not just an analysis of Soweto, but a critique of the theory of Apartheid alias separate development'. Roy Lewis, *The Times*

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tion arising from the 'Enoch Powell' statement would be put forward by either the Young Socialists or Park Ward branch and I think this is what the Conservative councillor heard. It is typical of the way in which Ms Colquhoun has conducted her campaign during the past seven months that she should imply that responsible party members would impart confidential information to an opposition party. To my knowledge, no report appeared in any journal during the week following the formulation of the motion, and the first inquiry from a press agency reached me shortly after noon on 15 March, the day on which Ms Colquhoun received my letter. All the parties to this controversy were advised by the regional organiser to make no public statements, but far from discouraging press inquiries and comment, Ms Colquhoun conducted a public campaign in the media against Park Ward branch, individual members of that branch, and Labour Party members from other branches and organisations who had criticised her, alleging extremism and infiltration from the extreme Left and implying that the GMC was packed and the EC elections rigged. The other parties followed the advice of the regional organiser and remained silent in spite of these provocative statements.

In view of Ms Colquhoun's statement that her opponents had 'everything stacked against her' it must be pointed out that the procedure followed in dealing with matters of censure in the Labour Party is weighted on the side of the person being censured. Also Ms Colquhoun took full advantage of her situation as an MP. The decision at the special meeting was by secret ballot and no one was allowed into the meeting after the debate started, as the rule is that anyone voting must have heard the whole debate and so make his decision on what he has heard. This puts a mandate out of the question. This was confirmed by the regional organiser at the meeting on 27 September when he indicated that mandating is no longer in the rules.

The phrase 'Park Branch choice' is new to me and to everyone I have asked about it. The fact is that Park Ward has not even discussed the matter of a candidate. Should the NEC eventually permit the selection of a new candidate for Northampton North, applicants can be assured that the selection will be carried out properly according to Labour Party rules and under the supervision of the regional organiser. It is the belief that she can no longer hold the seat, together with the fear that there could be more massive 'clangers' on the scale of the Enoch Powell statement, which underlies the case brought against Ms Colquhoun, whatever she may say about the real cause being her lesbianism. I can find no record in the shorthand note of the 23 August proceedings of the invitation Ms Colquhoun says she made to discuss her private life. If, though, at any time members have assured her they do not hold her lesbianism against her, why should they not be believed? Is Ms Colquhoun to be the only arbiter of truth?

PATRICK F. GARNETT

*56 Pinewood Road*
*Northampton*

*Sir,* As editor of the *Northants Post* newspaper, mentioned in Maureen Colquhoun's article I was amazed to read that I 'used to work for the *Daily Mail*'. I have never worked for the *Daily Mail*. I did in fact work for the *Daily Express*, and I presume Ms Colquhoun has confused one Tory paper with another. It is also totally untrue to suggest, as she did, that the *Post* has links with the *Mail*. We have never been linked with the *Mail* or the *Express*. We are a privately-owned paper.

She states that a Northampton evening paper behaved 'impeccably' over her case while the *Post* and others did not. If this means they refused to come down off the fence like ourselves, then the word 'impeccably' has a new meaning.

TONY BOULLEMIER
*Editor*

*Northants Post*
*Northampton*

## Dirty Linen

*Sir,* I was interested to learn from Peter Conrad's review of *A Marriage of True Minds* (NS 28 October) that he found the book so spicily gossipy, so sexually exciting. 'Scatological', 'excremental', and 'anal-erotic' are some of the enticing adjectives he applied to its contents, and though this is hardly the light in which George Spater and I would have thought of our book, we must be grateful to him for this highly original and titillating testimonial.

But when it comes to Mr Conrad's statement that 'Ian Parsons was a nodding acquaintance of the Woolfs in the 1930s and a neighbour of Leonard's after Virginia's death', with its suggestion that I met him occasionally at a flower-show or with mutual friends, I hope you will allow me to put the record straight. Because of his friendship with my wife and myself, Leonard Woolf came to live next door to us in London in 1943, and from that date until his death in 1969 I saw him (except for the last nine months of the war, when I was in France) two or three times a week in London and almost every weekend in Sussex. Moreover, for the last 23 of those years he was, additionally, my publishing partner. I knew him, therefore, as intimately as it is possible to know anybody outside one's own family, and had no need to resort to Mr Conrad's wholly imaginary 'snooping and eavesdropping'. So much for facts. As to Peter Conrad's assertion that 'Mr Parsons is a publisher, and equates literary achievement with numbers of copies sold', I am content to rely on the publishing record of Chatto and Windus and The Hogarth Press, over many years, to refute this particular aspersion.

IAN PARSONS

*Kingston*
*Lewes, Sussex*

*Sir,* It is Peter Conrad's gossipy review of *A Marriage of True Minds* which exhibits all the nasty-mindedness which he so offensively and absurdly attributes to the authors; and at the same time it gives a very misleading impression of the book itself. It seems to me that the book had two simple aims. First, to give a short and straightforward account of the Woolf marriage, summarising material which has otherwise to be quarried out of the Holroyd biography of Lytton Strachey, the Bell biography of Virginia Woolf, the three volumes of her letters and the first volume of her diary, and the five volumes of Leonard Woolf's autobiography. Secondly, to make use of the very large collection of Woolf papers deposited at the University of Sussex, which Mr Spater was the first to arrange and study in detail. I think the book achieves both aims with clarity and honesty. And, in addition, it provides a fascinating gallery of hitherto unpublished photographs.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

*University of Sussex*

## The Medievalist Case

*Sir,* I'm not a medievalist myself and I don't know how medievalists will respond to Paula Neuss's defence of teaching medieval literature (NS 4 November). But I hope some will feel that to compare various medieval works to ads on Capital Radio and yesterday's newspaper is rather more than selling the pass, and that if you're going to write about medieval literature that's what you should write about, and not the very boring University of London English syllabus. Incidentally, would the NS pay me for copying out paragraphs of Chaucer? I could do with the money.

KEITH WALKER

*Department of English*
*University College*
*London WC1*

## Not So Innocent

*Sir,* As a school pupil myself, I wish to support Mr W. S. Brownlie (Letters, 21 October). As he says, corporal punishment is quick, and the pupils are in favour of it. In the ten years I have been at school I have had the strap six or seven times, so I know what it's like. Though it's painful at the time, I would rather get my punishment over and done with. Like most boys I know, I don't resent a strapping when I've done something to deserve it. We all misbehave sometimes and when I do I'm quite prepared to take a few strokes of the strap.

It's true that some teachers use the strap too much, and some pupils are badly affected by it. This could be avoided by giving everyone the right to choose; those who prefer an alternative like lines or loss of privileges could have it. But I and the majority of boys will always prefer the strap.

ALASTAIR MACDONALD

*64 Stockethill Road*
*Aberdeen*

## After Donald Woods

*Sir,* With the well-deserved and long overdue silencing of your trouble-maker in South Africa, Donald Woods, I see that his place is swiftly filled by another of his ilk, one Roger Omond. His article 'Blackout in South Africa' (NS 28 October) is the same old mixture of half-truth, innuendo, on the spot journalistic clap-trap that we know so well and have almost come to accept as inevitable in the reporting of this subject in your otherwise admirable journal.

One particular statement deserves refutation: 'Avoiding the call-up and border duty is a constant theme of young white conversation.' This, if I may say so, is sheer balderdash. May we have the facts on which this statement is based because it is surely Hitler's 'big lie'? As a South African of nearly 30 years standing, and not a supporter of the present government, I find this type of reporting not only unhelpful, but sick-making. Could we please know Mr Omond's experience and qualifications for his new job?

PETER R. LODGE

*4 Jacqueline Avenue*
*Johannesburg*

Roger Omond is a member of the editorial staff of the East London *Daily Dispatch*, the paper edited by Donald Woods until his banning last month. – Ed NS.

## An Azanian Christmas

*Sir,* May we invite your readers to send greetings for Christmas and the New Year to the families of political prisoners, detainees, the banned and the banished in South Africa, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Namibia? Such greetings are seen as an expression of support and concern, and are deeply appreciated by the recipients. Lists are available from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, at the address below.

ABDUL S. MINTY
*Hon. Secretary*

*Anti-Apartheid Movement*
*89 Charlotte Street*
*London W1*

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# BOOKS IN GENERAL

Craig Raine

# Double Thunder

**The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Works** by ANGUS WILSON *Secker & Warburg* £6.90

The great critics have always been practitioners, great practitioners. Their best criticism is an act of recognition; they offer something of themselves, as Eliot knew. 'I believe that the critical writings of poets', he wrote,

> owe a great deal of their interest to the fact that the poet, at the back of his mind, if not as his ostensible purpose, is always trying to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind he wants to write.

Clearly, as a method it has its dangers. When the specialist takes the pulse of another specialist, it is nearly always with the thumb, hardly ever with the index finger. If he finds the right place, the reward is a double thunder; if not, he finds only the pulse in his own thumb. So Coleridge, using his interest in psychology, broadened the scope of Shakespearean studies. On the other hand, Eliot was mistaken when he identified the stirrings of Dryden's genius in the single line, 'all the sad variety of Hell'. Profoundly reverberant on its own, the line dwindles in its context:

> In liquid burnings, or on dry to dwell,
> Is all the sad variety of Hell.

Dryden's emphasis is on punishment, Eliot's on the nature of sin. The stirrings he felt were, in fact, his own.

Angus Wilson knows the middle class. He is at home with their slang ('rumpty-foo', 'flumdiddle'), their pretensions, their fears and their virtues. Whenever his new study touches on the middle class, it is excellent. Here, he puts this thumb on it, a specialist hearing double thunder. Though his book could never replace Carrington's superb and definitive biography, it does offer interesting modifications that arise out of his shrewd empathy with a bygone middle class. With the help of James Craig's unpublished study of Kipling's father, he shows that Lockwood Kipling's career was, in its early days, more humble than Carrington believed. Lockwood wasn't appointed principal of the Art School in Bombay. He was one of three assistants. The myth, as Wilson sees it, stemmed from middle-class gentility, a concern for appearances. He, however, knows the thing-in-itself, so that he is mildly sceptical about Kipling's family piety throughout *The Strange Ride*. He is engaged at precisely those moments when the tightness of the family unit looks more like constriction than solidarity.

The other side of this salutary scepticism is an unexpected sympathy. To the much-reviled Mrs Holloway, the 'Aunt Rosa' who brutalised the young Rudyard, Wilson brings quiet understanding (as did Carrington) and some new research into her social position. Kipling always referred to her as 'the Woman'. Angus Wilson replaces this justifiably savage caricature with his own thoughtful characterisation, explaining with terrible conviction just how deeply one member of the middle class on the way down can resent another member in the ascendant. He gives us, as it were, a peek into the diary of a nobody. Mrs Holloway was the poor relation of Oxfordshire somebodies, whose son was headed for the ignominious world of thirty bob a week. Alec Hill, early co-mentor of Kipling with his wife, is rescued from obscurity in the same way. These touches supplement Carrington's account without supplanting it.

One expects more from the criticism, but the novelist-critic is curiously disappointing, except when some obscure bit of middle-class lore proves useful. He remembers, for instance, from his boyhood, that his social class widely believed that during the first world war the Germans cut off the right arms of Belgian boys to prevent them being soldiers later. This special knowledge explains an obscurity in 'Swept and Garnished', when the German lady is told by one of the Belgian ghost-children to look closely at the boy's right sleeve. At the time, it was enough for Kipling to write 'Frau Ebermann looked and saw', without specifying what she saw.

On the whole, however, Wilson is irritated by literary obscurity, the puzzling details of Kipling's art, and dismisses many of Kipling's later stories. His approach is broader and derives from the pattern of Kipling's life – the search for a settled, loved place and a nostalgia for the open trail. 'The child's vision, whether of a world contracted or of a world traversed, lies deep at the heart of Kipling's imagination.' These two capacious contraries are roomy enough to accommodate virtually everything that Kipling wrote (as well as the works of one or two other people), but they are too general to be especially illuminating. The categories of Miss J. M. S. Tompkins, in her excellent study, are much more shrewdly chosen. Even where he is lost in admiration, Wilson is inadequate: the Indian stories he values so highly are cannibalised rather than criticised as detailed wholes. He arranges huge bleeding chunks of quotation to make up a mosaic of Kipling's India. The result is crudely effective but hack-work all the same. Despite their shared expatriatism and a nostalgia for foreign parts, one begins to feel that as artists they have little in common. The hoped-for recognition never takes place. On Kipling the man, Wilson is good – sympathetic, patient, severe when necessary and, above all, fair. It is the art that leaves him standing.

Take his comments on the notoriously difficult 'Mrs Bathurst'. Like most readers before him, Wilson sees it as an obscure tale of elective affinities – the core of which is the passion of a middle-aged warrant officer called Vickery for Mrs Bathurst, a widowed New Zealand hotel-keeper. What has passed between them is only guessed at by the narrators. But they agree that Mrs Bathurst is something special. She has 'It', hence Vickery's obsession which manifests itself suddenly and feverishly when, in Cape Town, he sees her for a few seconds on film. She is arriving at Paddington Station in search of Vickery. Night after night Vickery watches her, then deserts. Another narrator, Hooper, supplies the grisly dénouement at the point where the other two, Pyecroft and Pritchard, break off. Hooper has been up-country, working for the railways. In a teak forest he finds the body of Vickery and a companion: both have been turned to charcoal by a stroke of lightning. Vickery's body, though it crumbles to the touch, is recognisable by his false teeth (four 'on the lower port side') and a tattoo which shows up white, like writing on a burned letter. There is some dispute as to whether the other body is that of Mrs Bathurst: Pritchard plainly thinks it is, but critics have differed.

Angus Wilson hardly cares. 'I think it is more likely that it never had much meaning,' he writes, and goes on to denounce Kipling's rambling narrative. In general, he is irritated by Pyecroft's cockney presentation, without realising that here his chipper jauntiness is in deliberate and terrible contrast to the final tableau. The Kipling Wilson likes is the Kipling that moves 'into the world of poetry', a phrase which signals in an E. M. Forsterish way an excursion into vagueness. Kipling's late work is more truly poetic as a poet (rather than a novelist) understands it – it is precise as a Swiss-made watch. 'Mrs Bathurst' is no exception. Everything fits, but the reader has to wind it up.

The theory of elective affinity stems from the narrators. They fit Vickery's story to their own experience: sailors, they know, constantly desert for reasons of the heart. Moon has jumped ship in the South Seas for a woman, 'bein' a Mormonastic beggar'; Spit-Kid Jones married a 'cocoanut-woman'. Hooper agrees that some women can drive a man crazy if he doesn't save himself. Hence the theory. Kipling, however, is careful to show the observant reader that his narrators are unreliable, and to tuck away the truth of the matter. The credulity of Pyecroft and Pritchard is established in the framing story of Boy Niven who dragged them off on a wild-goose chase through the woods of British Columbia. In addition, there is a persistent motif of unreliable machinery – trains derailed on straight lines, a gyroscope that goes on the blink, a brake-van chalked for repair, damaged rolling stock, ill-fitting false teeth, and so on. It is a broad hint that the machinery of this story is also unreliable.

Moreover, on ascertainable facts, the narrators are shown to be wrong. Hooper hears a clink of couplings – 'It's those dirty little Malay boys, you see.' It isn't. It's Pyecroft and Pritchard. Similarly, Pyecroft gets an expert to 'read' the captain's face – wrongly as it turns out. Further, Kipling makes Pyecroft employ a variety of foreign

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phrases, all italicised, adding an extra one to the magazine version – *moi aussi*, *verbatim*, *ex officio*, *status quo*, *résumé*, *peeris* and *casus belli*. Taken with other Biblical props from Acts – the beer ('Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine') and the strong south-easter ('a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind') – these phrases add up to a parody of the gift of tongues. In other words, Pyecroft speaks more than he knows, trusting to erroneous inspiration, as when he compares Vickery's false teeth to a 'Marconi ticker', hinting at strange communication with Mrs Bathurst. Hooper's tic of dialogue is to say 'You see', a total of 16 times. The point is that his companions don't see at all.

The truth is concealed in the words of *The Honeysuckle and the Bee*, sung by some picnickers on the beach. I'm surprised that Wilson doesn't remember them – words by A. H. Fitz, music by W. H. Penn. They tell us what Vickery only hints at in the phrase 'my *lawful* wife', namely that he has married Mrs Bathurst bigamously, in a Moon-like way. A 'lawful' wife implies an unlawful wife and the song confirms this suspicion: 'As they sat there side by side,/ He asked her to be his bride./She answered "Yes" and sealed it with a kiss.'

Vickery's eventual fate, death by lightning, tells us what happened after the bigamy, for it is paralleled in the framing story of Boy Niven. 'Heavy thunder with continuous lightning' is, according to Pyecroft, the punishment for *desertion*. Vickery, then, is a double-deserter, from Mrs Bathurst and the navy. We don't know much about Mrs Bathurst, but we know enough to understand why Vickery is afraid, 'like an enteric at the last kick': first, 'she never scrupled to . . . set 'er foot on a scorpion'; secondly, as Pritchard's anecdote of the beer-bottles demonstrates, she never forgets. After five years, she remembers Pritchard's name and his 'particular' beer, unlike the servant girl who chucks him a bottle in mistake for someone else. The contrast is telling.

Vickery has committed a crime, bigamy, and that presumably is why the captain connives at his absence without leave – desertion being less of a disgrace than legal proceedings from the navy's point of view. The element of criminality also explains why Vickery watches the film so compulsively, yet with such dread: in the oldest of traditions, he is revisiting the scene of his crime. The film explains, too, that Vickery, unlike the others, has found Mrs Bathurst less than unforgettable. He takes Pyecroft along for confirmation – so much for their romantic interpretation.

No one would claim that 'Mrs Bathurst' is an easy story. But it is, in its way, a test case. Even those who do not understand it respond to the awful power of its end. That Wilson should find it so empty is, I'm afraid, a comment on himself, not on Kipling.

Wittier than the Borgias...
tougher than the Waughs...
shorter than the Mitfords...
scruffier than the Huxleys...
drunker than the Windsors-
The Carter family,
as revealed by
ALAN COREN
in
The Peanut Papers
His hilarious 'Miz Lillian' letters
70p
Robson Books

**Philip French**

# Punch and Judy Man

**Letters on Literature and Politics, 1912-1972** by EDMUND WILSON edited by Elena Wilson *Routledge & Kegan Paul* £12.50

Edmund Wilson inveighed against the ludicrous pedantry that made so many definitive editions of classic American texts impossibly expensive and barely readable. His widow Elena has perhaps gone too far in the other direction in editing this hefty (I wouldn't risk the wrath of Wilson's ghost by saying 'massive') selection of his correspondence. Addressees are inadequately identified and always in a phrase culled from Wilson's writings; there's only one long footnote in 700 pages (about his Hebrew studies), and a single lengthy epigraph by another writer. This makes the book less approachable than, say, Joe Ackerley's or Virginia Woolf's letters and would also appear to ignore Wilson's own advice to Fitzgerald's first biographer Arthur Mizener in 1950:

> It is important, writing a biography, to remember that you are telling a story and that the problems of presenting the material are in many ways just the same as those of presenting a subject in fiction. You cannot take for granted . . . any knowledge whatever of your particular subject.

The shape of the book is wrong too, as was that of the first posthumous volume of notebooks *The Twenties*, which came out two years ago. I feel particularly attached to those chunky volumes that, despite changes of publisher, remained the same and somehow reflected the probity, the consistent unorthodoxy and stocky physique of the man himself, once described by Lionel Trilling as resembling 'a British sea captain closely related to Henry James'.

For all the under-editing, though, it is a marvellous book, interweaving half-a-dozen distinct strands of interest. First, it is an intellectual and social history of the century by a uniquely gifted individual: Wilson was a poet, playwright, editor, novelist, critic, historian, social observer, and the foremost American man-of-letters of his time (he was also a skilled magician and Punch-and-Judy man). In addition, the book is a record of the literary life in our times and what it exacted of those who committed themselves to it. It is about cultural transformation, and how an acute mind comprehended and reacted to it. It is a touching account of friendships forged in one set of circumstances and tested over the years through a period of dramatic change. There is, too, the compulsive fascination of seeing ideas develop, relationships form, books take definitive shape. The process by which such seminal works as *Axel's Castle*, *To the Finland Station* or (the longest gestation) *Patriotic Gore* emerged has an inevitable fascination. A similar excitement resides in watching Wilson's discovery, analysis and advocacy of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, and the reminder of what it meant to encounter them for the first time. Very early on Wilson noticed that Eliot's 'opinions when he writes them always seem judicious and specific, but his personality is really rather incoherent, and that is what his poetry comes out of'. A night out together on bootleg gin helped bring things into focus, and left Wilson with an enduring feeling of guilt for leading the diffident poet astray.

Wilson hated to see 'disinterested' misused. It was an important word to him, because he was a passionately disinterested participant in a jealous, deeply competitive world where he dispensed public criticism and private counsel in an even-handed way (to his old college friend Scott Fitzgerald, for instance, and to Hemingway, whose talents he was the first to recognise). Wilson 'was the moral and intellectual conscience of his generation', says Daniel Aaron in his excellent introduction to the book, and we can see this in a very precise fashion in relation to Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Before the publication of *This Side of Paradise* in 1920 he told Fitzgerald, 'It would all be better if you would tighten up your artistic conscience and pay a little more attention to form'; after Scott's death he edited *The Last Tycoon* and compiled *The Crack-Up*, donating his small fee to the author's family, though then as throughout his career he was in severe financial straits. He went out of his way to review Hemingway's obscurely published early stories, acclaimed *The Sun Also Rises* as a masterpiece, and urged him to come home: 'A thick crust is forming over literature, and I think it is your duty to come back to your homeland and help break it up,' he wrote in 1927. To the detriment of America and Hemingway the advice went unheeded, and we learn later with astonishment that the novelist attempted to prevent the publication of Wilson's mildly critical essay 'Hemingway, Gauge of Morale' in *The Wound and the Bow*.

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For his survival Wilson was dependent on the New York literary world, where he worked as editor and writer, and on the academic world, where from time to time he taught and lectured. He flattered and short-changed neither, but was fiercely critical of (and deliberately detached from) both. 'I'm a little dismayed – though perhaps unnecessarily – at seeing how many of the literati are taking to teaching as what *Partisan Review* calls a crutch,' he wrote to Allen Tate in 1939, and hammered away at the complacency of the subsidised campus literary reviews. On the other hand, he let the *New Yorker* and *New Republic* know precisely what he thought of their political and stylistic conformity. His 1947 letter to the *New Yorker*'s fiction editor, in which he suggested that his own stories were 'not pale and empty and silly enough' to appear there, is a devastating document, but no more so than his 1940 lecture to his friend Malcolm Cowley on the Stalinist character of some of his articles in *New Republic*.

Wilson spared his friends nothing, but what must often have seemed the price of his friendship were in fact its gifts. Who wouldn't ultimately be pleased to have him correct their Hebrew, Greek or Russian, upbraid them for their misuse of English, challenge their politics or their prosody? 'I feel obliged to tell you that your article about the San Francisco convention sounded like a teenager squealing over the Beatles,' he told his old friend John Dos Passos in 1964, reproaching him for his shrill support of Barry Goldwater; 'Are you sure that your heart and your respiratory system were all right when you wrote that poem?' he inquired of Max Eastman in 1942.

Towards the end of Wilson's life there was an element of despair. The American scene depressed him; he came to feel a stranger in his own country. It wasn't that he hadn't received his due – though it's perfectly true that he hadn't. Rather it was that he felt himself the lone and lonely survivor of a vanishing species. But while he often damned his times, he never sought refuge in easy irony or fashionable ambivalence. He hated the pop culture the Beatles represented and the fashionable cant that made George McGovern the Democratic candidate in 1972 – but one of his last acts was to sign a petition protesting against the immigration authorities' harassment of John Lennon and he died wearing a McGovern button.

There are jokes, insights and revelations on every page of this book. 'I look forward to the regeneration of America by means of architecture,' the 20-year-old Wilson writes to a college friend; 'I have resolved furthermore when I waste time in the future to waste it only in dissipation, not in idle trifling,' he remarks after the death of his father in 1923; 'There's some talk – believe it or not – of selling *I Thought of Daisy* to the movies,' he told Louise Bogan in 1936: 'I want to sell them *Axel's Castle* too, with Adolph Menjou as Proust and the Marx Brothers as Joyce'; 'Carl Sandburg is the worst thing that happened to Lincoln since Booth shot him,' he informed Dos Passos.

But the passage that seems to me to bring together the many sides of Wilson, to suggest the quietly heroic nature of his vocation, occurs in a January 1941 letter to his Princeton contemporary John Peale Bishop, inviting him to write a poem for a special *New Republic* supplement to mark the death of Scott Fitzgerald:

> It's extremely depressing to me that Joyce should have died, too – even though I suppose his work was finished. Yeats, Freud, Trotsky, and Joyce have all gone in so short a time – it is almost like the death of one's father. I think, though, that Scott at the present time needs commemoration more than Joyce, because his contemporaries have done him less justice. I'm sorry you're feeling exhausted – but come! Somebody's got to survive and write.

**John Fuller**

# In a Mad Family

**The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings, 1927-1939** edited by Edward Mendelson *Faber* £8.95

*The English Auden* has arrived like the end of rationing after the war, long hoped-for and imagined but unexpectedly rich and bountiful. Don't blench at the price, rather more than last year's *Collected Poems*. Inflation may be partly to blame (it has about five-sixths the number of pages) but not, absolutely not, inflation of Auden's early achievement, which is enchantingly vindicated by the attention paid to it here. Material once familiar to a Thirties audience but slashed from the canon as 'swank' or 'pompous trash' (Auden's interestingly non-doctrinaire self-criticism began very early) is restored to its context, while uncollected and unpublished items are added with discretion.

The volume is, of course, an anthology, and should not be confused with the first volume of a complete Auden, still hypothetical and necessarily fraught with editorial headaches. The possessor of the *Collected Poems, The Orators,* and the travel books and plays still in print perhaps does not realise how little of the early Auden he has. Edward Mendelson here prints material from early editions of *The Orators* and an early version of *Paid on Both Sides.* He has added upward of 80 poems (some of considerable length) and 28 prose items, including edited fragments of a 1929 journal and the first chapter of an unpub-

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lished book of 1939, called *The Prolific and the Devourer*. There could have been much more than this, but Mendelson's primary task has been restoration rather than development of the canon. It may fairly be said that the volume, like a historical map, represents the limits of known Auden in 1939.

There is one invaluable novelty in *The English Auden*. Although the collections *Poems, Look Stranger!* and *Another Time* form its basis, the actual order of the poems has been rearranged to conform with their order of composition, so far as this can be discovered. The new order is sometimes very suggestive, and biographical interest is also sharpened by the new accessibility of prose items (journal, essay, manifesto, review, parable) chosen with particular care for their bearing on Auden's developing attitudes to the artist and his society. Mendelson's dating will surely help to make criticism of Auden's career in this decade more accurate and sensitive. For instance, I would imagine that a study of Auden's stanza-forms between 1931 and 1933, and of the cultivated rhetoric that sustains them, would be especially rewarding.

To me, this period is of possibly greater interest than what came before or immediately after, perhaps because it contains Auden's transition from a private to a public writer. I suspect that the reason is also that his favoured forms at this time were the dream-vision and the ode, both forms to be brought to a consummation in the mature work of the Forties and Fifties. There are several new or restored examples of the former, incidentally, including the wonderfully phantasmagoric Part 1 of 'A Happy New Year'. Another 1,000-line fragment modelled on Dante (with Gerald Heard playing Virgil) is promised for the *Review of English Studies* next year. Auden is at his most analytically persuasive in these forms, with their ruminative and intimate (but non-confessional) tone and superb geographical sweep.

Behind the highbrow theorising and mysteries of Auden's verse, behind its sound, colour and gesture, behind its verbal expansiveness and psychic scenarios, lies an abundant interest in actual human behaviour that few important poets can match. Auden looked and listened with an intentness and accuracy which really does make him 'English' Auden. One thinks of the stanzas introducing the motor-cyclist in 'A Happy New Year', beautifully observed; all the summer landscapes with their intrusive ugliness or danger; the middle-class recreations and ceremonies captured by the absurdist lens of *The Orators*; and above all the calm and simple detail found everywhere. Auden *knows* how 'children in Chester look to Moel Fammau to decide/ On picnics by the clearness or withdrawal of her treeless crown', and he has *seen* a defeated rugger team 'in a drizzle,/ Clambering, sodden, from a maundering chara., *licked to the wide*'. We recognise and remember, and it is all English, the quintessence of a world we still know. Mendelson rightly points out that the American Auden loses this sense of place, the frequent place-name titles of poems being replaced by titles concerned with time. In the English Auden, the sense of place is accompanied by the sense of being trapped in a mad family. 'Englishness' is eccentric, solipsistic, doomed. The accusatory vigour revealed by the new and restored poems underlines Auden's genius as a satirist of his class and cultural milieu: 'I have a handsome profile/ I've been to a great public school'; 'heavy bishops on the lawn'; 'Where is Eliot? Dreaming of nuns'. Auden was never afraid of vulgarity.

Mr Mendelson's editorial conduct in this volume is finely regulated, conscientious, modest. In the invisible details of scholarship (transcription of devilish handwriting, emending obscure Shetland place-names, taking a bold but conservative line on puzzling punctuation, and so on) he seems to me to be quite first-rate. There is no textual apparatus because none is called for in a volume of this sort, so one can't say whether variants are errors or considered emendations from MS sources to which Mendelson has access (though there *is* a complete line dropped from *The Orators*, for which someone at BAS Printers Limited, Over Wallop, Hampshire, should be walloped). Mendelson's notes economically explain the major textual differences, at any rate. There is not a great deal that is arguable about the volume. I missed the collaborative 'Last Will and Testament' (not in MacNeice's *Collected Poems* either), but it is, after all, in print. Another thing is that the few poems from *Another Time* written in the US are omitted, whereas several poems of the period 1939 to 1942 which happen not to be in any collection in print *are* included (so that, as Mendelson carefully explains, *The English Auden* and the *Collected Poems* may reprint between them all the separable poems that Auden published in book form). Fair enough, but under this scheme a couple of the omitted *Another Time* poems get back in! It's logical, but peculiar.

*The English Auden* does, then, give a fresh insight into the poet's intentions without betraying his standards or letting his readers in effect nose about in his wastepaper basket. He noted in 1929 that 'the only good reason for doing anything is for fun'. His intentions and standards were, of course, normative, catholic and concerned – but the sense of fun is rarely absent. This is as impressive a dozen years' work as one can think of from any poet.

**AIDAN HIGGINS**

cements his reputation as one of the finest Irish novelists after Beckett with his new novel, **Scenes from a Receding Past** (£4.95), which catches the essential moments of an Irish boyhood and young manhood. Comparisons with early Joyce by reviewers and delight at the accuracy and beauty of his descriptions of time recalled have made a regional bestseller of the author's fourth novel. Other new fiction includes the latest Claude Simon, **Triptych (£5.50)**, a doyen of the *nouveau roman* and one of the most distinguished living novelists whose rearrangement of time and blending of sex and fantasy reach new dimensions in this, his eighth novel. Fitz-James O'Brien, an Irish American killed young in the civil war, inaugurates **Discovery Editions** with his Poe-like **Fantastic Tales** (£4.95). Arp's **Collected French Writings** (£3.95) is now in paperback.

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**Christopher Hitchens**

# Waiting Game

**A History of Rhodesia** by ROBERT BLAKE *Eyre Methuen* £12.50
**Roots of a Revolution** by NDABANINGI SITHOLE *Oxford* £3.50

It is an intriguing irony that a system which claims to represent 'Christian civilisation' against barbarism should find itself at odds with all its churches and militantly opposed by guerrilla leaders formed in mission schools. In his opening chapter, Lord Blake suggests that the period of white hegemony in Africa may come in time to seem startlingly brief and ephemeral. He is in no doubt, by the end of this formidable book, that the hijacking of Rhodesia by Ian Smith and his gang will hasten that end; and, for a Tory, he is pitiless in his criticism of the settler rebellion. But he surveys the history of the country with real sympathy and occasional nostalgia.

He is alive to the ambiguities of the story – such as the abuse of the word 'civilisation' – and generally adopts the policy of separating the sin from the sinner. Thus, even though his acknowledgments are almost exclusively to Europeans, and although he gives Rhodes the benefit of the doubt on most personal questions, he is harsh about the cheating, the bullying, the *folie de grandeur*. He is also, as usual, an entertaining historian. There are plenty of anecdotes and asides to salt the narrative (did you know that Rhodes never saw the Victoria Falls?) and his fluency with English history at the time of, say, the Jameson Raid valuably enlarges his perspective.

Blake has a particular way with evidence. Discussing the treatment of the Mashona and Matabele tribes after the foundation of Rhodesia, he quotes Lord Milner as saying: 'the blacks have been scandalously used . . . a lot of unfit people were allowed to exercise power, or at any rate did exercise

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it, especially with regard to the natives.' Blake adds that Milner was 'neither a sentimentalist, a do-gooder nor a negrophile'. Of course, this does serve in a way to reinforce the point, but one could wish for a bit more sensitivity. In a different way, and at a later juncture, he does not actually describe the Douglas-Home settlement plan as a sell-out to Smith, but he does provide the evidence for those who would do so. *A History of Rhodesia* is, then, among many other things, an excellent reference book.

There are continual reminders of the author's *Weltanschauung*. Discussing the problems of self-determination and post-colonialism, he suggests that 'the right to misgovern oneself is as valid as any other political right and is exercised more often than most'. After a frequently hilarious account of Rhodesia's losing battle against black and white sexual pairing, he observes that the priapic European could always repair for a good time in Mozambique – 'until Dr Machel put an end to all that'. Again, reflecting on the rapacity of settlers in the 1890s, he writes: 'as so often in colonial history, the fault of the whites lay not in not treating blacks as equals but in failing to recognise that some blacks were more equal than others.' Shades of the Mutiny. You might have thought that those two mistakes were in fact aspects of the same thing. But this growling Tory undercurrent does not get in the way of the story.

A fine feature of the book is the weight that it gives to that handful of European politicians – like Garfield Todd – who have set their faces against racism and brutality. As Blake hints in his melancholy closing passage, history may not have much to say of them, but they should not be ignored or forgotten. And, besides, their story necessarily emerges from any account of the faction-fighting that led up to UDI. Blake is generous to them, and that is good. I think he might revise some of his less-tenderly researched judgments about African leaders, notably his belief that 'a decade of detention has made Nkomo, Sithole and Mugabe virtually non-persons to a whole generation of African youth'.

A reading of Reverend Sithole's *Roots of a Revolution* might, even so, make one wish Blake was right. It is a species of fictionalised symposium, featuring contrived arguments and set-pieces between whites, priests, cops and rebels. The dialogues and scenes are pretty lifeless – perhaps because the book was written in prison, perhaps because Sithole is not the philosopher king of the future Zimbabwe that he evidently thinks he is. The main insight it provides is into the widespread and undeniable shame felt by many Rhodesian Africans at the fact that their country is virtually the last in Africa to achieve independence. More of this kind of sympathetic aperçu could have leavened Lord Blake's book to advantage. As Macaulay said in his 'Essay on Milton':

> Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying down as a self-evident proposition that no people ought to be free until they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water until he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for freedom until they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever.

## Sir Edward Pygge

# Others of Us

**A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers** by HAROLD WILSON *Weidenfeld/Michael Joseph* £7.50

Agreement is pretty general in the circles where I move that young Wilson has delivered us a bit of a donkey-drop here. The temptation is strong upon one to open the shoulders for the sake of the club and heave the thing mightily over the distant sight-screens. But perhaps one ought to give mature consideration to the scorecard first. You see, I was brought up to ask myself one question whenever I picked up a new book. That question was: why has this chap written this effort? Because there's always something needling a chap who writes a book, and in my experience it's one of three things. Top of the list, he may be short of funds. Number two, he may be trying to impress the generality with his erudition and so forth. Three, and this is where the inspiration johnnies squeeze in, he just might be so full of the joys that he can't stop himself seizing his quill and scratching away for dear life until he's got something he can give his lady wife to pop down to the post-box with.

Now the funds thing, obviously, is out in Wilson's case. He is stinkers, and well known for it. Erudition he hasn't got, because, give him his due, he's been a politician for umpteen years and they don't have the time these days to acquire any. A good thing too, in my opinion. Your politician is a know-all, but one can stand that so long as one is sure that he doesn't in fact know a great deal about anything. As for inspiration, I may not be able to tell a spondee from a shooting stick but I have spent enough time nudging my way about among the urns, nightingales and hoary-headed swains of our nobler literature to be pretty well convinced in my own mind that Wilson hasn't got it. He doesn't tell a good tale, is what I mean. He is poor in gusto, of zing bereft, a sad case of verbal burble. So why is he trying?

It was not until my lady wife called my attention to the title of Wilson's tome, pointing out that if Ted Heath happened to review it we should then have 'A Prime Minister on *A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers*' (to which I added, amid gratifying hilarity from the listening throng, that if Alec Douglas-Home wrote in to dispute some point we should have reached the stage of 'A Prime Minister on a Prime Minister on *A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers*'), that I began to understand the fellow's motives. *He wants to remind himself that he was the Prime Minister.* It is quite poss-

## Peter Redgrove

# Platalow's Bung

She is a memorial to the idea of the bungalow;
Plato's Bungalow, the bungalow with the name-plate
For the postman, 'Plato'. I asked him, is that a name
Or are the people there called 'Plato'. 'Oh yes,' he said,
'That is the bungalow of the Plato family: Jim Plato,
Shirley Plato, and little Lettice Plato, and they call their dog . . .'
'Don't tell me,' I said, 'they call it "Socrates",'
'No, as a matter of fact, it bit me the other day,
So I know its name, the brute is called "Diana", it
Drew blood.' 'Thank you, postman, so that I shall know
You again, you are Mr – Actaeon?' 'No, Lord
Love you, Sir! not at all, my name's Ed; Ed, Sir,
Ed Imion, and my mother was Greek.'

RICHARD LLEWELLYN
Tell Me Now, and Again
'A likeable book for its very energy and idiosyncrasy.'
*Sunday Telegraph*
£4.95

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*Daily Telegraph*
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Michael Joseph

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ible that he remembers the experience far less well than the rest of us. A chap can go through these things as if in a dream. So now Wilson is pinching himself to make sure, as it were, that he's still asleep.

Furthermore, what our man likes best about being an ex-PM is being a member of the highly exclusive ex-PMs' club, and talking about the former members is a good way of enjoying this feeling, especially if one can sneak into one's text a few handy hints on where one belongs in the jolly old league table. Hence young Wilson's remark,

> In the last fifty years . . . the successful Prime Ministers have on the whole been those who spent hours each day in the smoke-room, tea-room or members' dining-room. Churchill, Attlee, Macmillan, and *others of us*; Douglas-Home and Heath much less.

(My italics, dots, etc.) This is an excellent way of saying, 'I was a successful PM', isn't it? I recommend 'others of us' to all of you as a euphemism for oneself. I only wish it had occurred to the Bard. 'Where the bee sucks, there suck others of us' would have made a pleasant change in that repetitive little number of his. (Talking of repetitions, I admire more than somewhat Wilson's knack of quoting himself twice over. This he demonstrates on page 305, where he fishes out part of his *Times* review of Macmillan's memoirs. The quote itself ends, 'As I wrote two years ago, Macmillan's role as a poseur was itself a pose.' What he tells us three times is true, what? I suppose this is Yorkshire thrift.)

Having read a couple of history books before, I didn't get all that much out of Wilson's comments on the other PMs. 'Pitt was the son of his father' – that sort of thing. Not much in the way of a definition of the Younger Pitt, is it? 'The revolting Mahdi' was a good phrase, but then I always enjoy the Mahdi. Quite a character, and did it all without hijacking anything, too. I will say this for Wilson, he has a sharpish eye for the auspicious detail – Gladstone's father, for instance, lived in what is now the Huyton constituency – and he manages to get the old Parliamentary drama going at certain points, especially when Macmillan is batting. 'Was the old maestro losing his grip? Parliament is a cruel place.' Good round-by-round stuff of that kind.

I gather young Wilson has perpetrated the odd howler here and there. In fact I know he has, because that TV chap with the bow tie made quite a list of them in the *Observer* of Sunday last. Even others of us noticed the one about Roosevelt having already cashed in his chips in July 1945 and being therefore regrettably unavailable for the Potsdam Conference. So all in all I conclude that we give this one the discreet Nero's thumb. Many a slip twixt Wilson and Winston, what?

**SIR HAROLD WILSON**
will be at
**MOWBRAYS BOOKSHOP**
Next Tuesday. See back page for details

**Michael Gilbert**

# Puppet-Mistress

**An Autobiography** by AGATHA CHRISTIE *Collins* £7.95

A small girl with yellow sausage curls and a solemn face, playing with a hoop under a monkey-puzzle tree in the garden of her father's house in Torquay: the authoress who outsold everyone except Shakespeare and the Bible, who wrote a play which outran every other, who dined with Royalty, and whose name became a household word long before she died. 'There, Sir,' as Mr Vincent Crummles remarked about his own daughter, 'there is the infant phenomenon.' But how is a phenomenon bred? You will find, I am sure, great pleasure in this autobiography, and much incidental instruction in the craft of writing. But you will not find the answer to that question.

Nor is it reasonable to suppose that you would. True, there are clues in the book, but it will need a more disinterested and analytical writer to win through to the heart of that labyrinth. As was apparent from her only other essay in autobiography ('Come Tell Me How You Live', published in 1946 and recently reprinted), Agatha Christie is a beguiling raconteuse. She excels in those short sharp jabs – probing, but no more malicious than a surgeon's knife – which bring a character to life. There are full-scale portraits of her mother (her father is a more shadowy character), of her brother, the scapegrace Monty, and her sister, the sensible Madge; and an army of minor characters – nurses, governesses, dentists, dragomen, publishers good and bad.

The character who naturally dominates the central portion is Agatha's first husband, Archibald Christie, from whom she was finally divorced in 1927. Anyone who knows anything about her life must recall the astounding sensation which was created a year earlier when Agatha disappeared; to be found, after a hunt which escalated into the realms of fantasy, living quietly at a hotel in Harrogate, having suffered, in the interval, from almost total amnesia. Some readers may find it disappointing that she omits the incident altogether. But she substitutes something even more interesting: the account of herself at that period, when a happy marriage was foundering, when her mother had just died, in a wretched state of health, going down to Torquay alone to try to clear up the family home. 'Confused, muddled and hungry, eating less and less', bursting into tears because her car would not start, staring blankly at a cheque which she had to sign, and finding she had forgotten her own name. A picture, painted in small but disturbing touches, of the onset of nervous collapse.

Readers of this book who are also aficionados of the Christie novels must be constantly asking themselves how far these real-life characters are reflected in the books. An answer is to be found in the revealing story of Archie's friend, Mr Belcher, a curious character who controlled potatoes in world war one. He insisted on being included in one of Agatha's books. When he heard he had been awarded the role of corpse he insisted instead on being cast as murderer: 'Because the murderer is the most interesting character in the book.' Agatha was willing, for once, to oblige, but says, 'He wasn't Belcher of course. He used some of his phrases and told some of his stories.' It was an experience she refused to repeat. 'I can't do anything with real people, I have to imagine them.' Agatha – in this book, and in talk – frequently poohpoohed the idea that she was creating real people. They were her puppets, she used to say. Puppets have strings, but not souls.

What she did create was a world. A complete, comprehensible, comfortable, cosy world. Emma Lathen, from the other side of the Atlantic, described the extraordinary effect Agatha Christie had on her compatriots:

> All over [my home town] men and women were ending the day by having tea at Lyons Corner House, by taking the underground to Paddington, by calling at the vicarage, or by making a trunk call from the village post office. So much for the end of British influence in the Colonies! *Some pens, it would appear, have victories denied to the sword.*

Most readers, when they reach the last pages of this modest and entertaining autobiography, even if they have not solved the central mystery, will, I think, concur in that epitaph.

**Jeremy Treglown**

# Comp Complexes

**The Dark Lady** by LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS *Weidenfeld* £4.95
**Tornado Pratt** by PAUL ABLEMAN *Gollancz* £4.95
**Sunset at Blandings** by P. G. WODEHOUSE *Chatto* £3.95
**Danny Hill** by FRANCIS KING *Hutchinson* £3.95
**Venus Reveal'd** by CELIA HADDON *Davis-Poynter* £5

Some of this week's novels look as though they started life as ambitious NEW STATESMAN competition entries but got too big to send in. There are two spoofs of *Fanny Hill*. There's Richard Usborne, filling out Wodehouse's incomplete 103-page *Sunset at Blandings* with footnotes and articles attempting, for example, to locate the real Market Blandings by collating train-times from the whole Blandings canon with appropriate volumes of Bradshaw. And there's a novel from Louis Auchincloss, adapting the scenario of Shakespeare's sonnets to 20th-century New York. Even Paul Ableman glances in his distinctive, funny and unsettling way at the tradition of learned wit by depriving his readers of any confidence in his narrator's reliability.

*The Dark Lady* takes itself more seriously

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than any of the others, and you have to admire the nerve of its operatic emotional range. A heavy-drinking, twice-married actress called Elesina is 'rescued' by the scheming hanger-on of a rich family, the Steins, which she infiltrates so successfully that she marries the husband, has an affair with his son David, inherits most of the family money and all its art collection, enters politics and ends up with the boy friend of the homosexual best friend of her step-son and lover, killed earlier as a volunteer in the British Army at Dunkirk. In all this she has taken on the ruthlessness of her original mentor, Ivy Trask, whom she discards; and one of the subjects of this excessively polythematic novel is whether the harmless alcoholic that Elesina looked like becoming isn't preferable to the powerfully unscrupulous figure she has turned into. The point is hinted at in a review of her performance, early on, as Marie Vigneron in Henri Becque's *Les Corbeaux*: 'She makes one feel that her real tragedy is not her abandonment, but her rescue.'

The allusion to Becque, like the pervasive influence of Shakespeare's sonnets, is part of an elaborate scheme of cultural self-congratulation by Auchincloss which can be hard to take; and the plot-gallop of the last 75 pages has its own problems of a different kind. It's a well-written book with moments of sharp moral observation, but – however appropriate the form may be, theoretically speaking, to the main character – finally not much more than glossy melodrama.

It's common, of course, for writers in a cynical age to hanker after the primary colours of romantic fiction, of a world in which people can make speeches like Ivy Trask's about David Stein: 'At least for me he lived, the poor darling. For the rest of you he just died.' Paul Ableman exploits the impulse more critically in a fiction which is itself a death-bed speech, the meandering, untrustworthy last reminiscences of a picaresque old millionaire, sentimental, rhetorical, full of appalling metaphysical clichés: 'What happens, Horace, when we die? . . . There must be more! Our flicker must be part of a great blaze too immense for human vision. Horace? Are you still there?' But, as in that last question, the big gestures are constantly undercut, chiefly by Ableman's detached handling of Tornado Pratt himself, whose assumption that he is dictating his memoirs to a biographer is thrown into doubt by his confusion over other matters. At one point he thinks Horace is his son; at many others his memoirs are inconsistent; and at the climax we are reminded that Horace may simply be the author, questioning the objective existence of his central character and allowing his uncertainty to penetrate the man's own imagination. It's a cleverly constructed, effective novel, for all its obvious literary debts, and never a complacent one. There are jokes and surprises all the way through, perhaps nowhere funnier than in Pratt's adolescent sexual encounter with a married woman, recalled late in the narrative. She seduces the puritanical youth but he is suicidally convinced he has raped her: 'I rolled off the bed, my underpants trailing around my ankles, and went staggering about the room, vaguely searching for a revolver.'

Ableman snatches scenes of high farce out of nothing. P. G. Wodehouse liked to build up to them, and he died before reaching what would have been the best moments in *Sunset at Blandings*. All the same, there's plenty in what he actually got written to crack up the most obdurate reader, particularly in Wodehouse's unique vein of demoted quotation: 'Look at the way you're treating that husband of yours,' Galahad accuses Lady Florence, 'driving him out into the snow and bringing his clipped moustache in sorrow to the grave.' Richard Usborne makes up the comic weight with his own brand of learned hilarity in the footnotes and appendices, but there is – predictably – real scholarship in his light treatment of the holographs transcribed here, which are full of absorbing information about how the man Evelyn Waugh called 'The Master' actually wrote. As a whole, the volume is a collector's piece.

Not so the prurient pastiches of Celia Haddon and Francis King. *Danny Hill* is the more successful parody and its plot moves along faster: Danny, half-brother of Fanny, has a number of sexual adventures ending in an affair with Lord Chatterley. He is 'a Prominent Gentleman', and his manly parts are a source of the kind of long-standing joke badly needed in *Venus Reveal'd*. In this case the hero is supposed to be a protégé of Fanny Hill's; what his exploits lack in comedy Celia Haddon tries to supply in annotations which hardly avoid the donnishness they are supposed to satirise.


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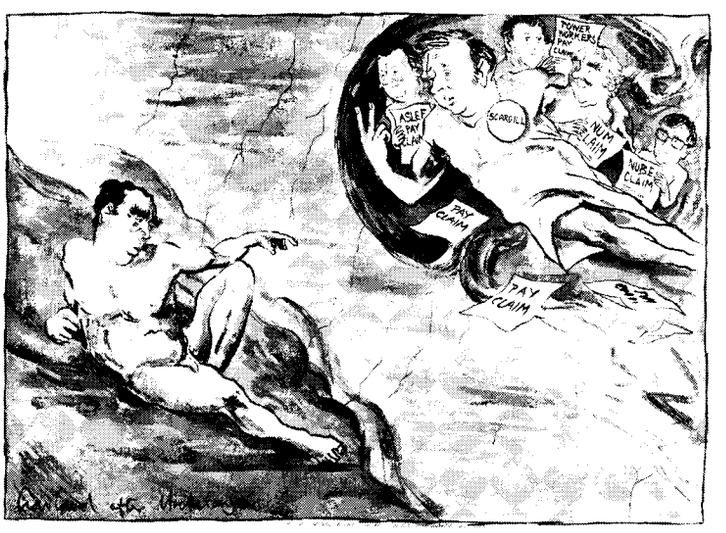


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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Eric Sams

## Blue Murder

After a blameless lifetime devoted to lieder I happened to stray into the opera house. The reception was rousing, in all senses. Careful comparison shows that solo song is innocence and idealism for introverts, whereas opera is passion and perfidy for paranoiacs. Even its etymology is deep-rooted in earthy reality: 'labour, pains, work produced', says my dictionary, obstetrically. But its themes regularly range far beyond the plain facts of birth and death into highly-coloured fantasies of sex and violence; it's a way of yelling blue murder.

No wonder it began where speech already borders on song or mime – in Italy, home of long vowels and short tempers. Singing actors rarely need to inquire whether it is a dagger that they see before them; it's either that or else one they don't see, behind them. The entire cast is at imminent risk of being punctured in mid-roulade and expiring in a dying fall. Let them escape the blade or the bullet and the alternatives are just as dire. Syphilis, saucily symbolised as Mother Goose, is inseparable from *The Rake's Progress*; no doubt it is also euphemised in the hellfire that consumed Giovanni, or the TB of such cases as Violetta and Mimi. Sexuality is now freely simulated on stage, as well as in the pit. All this is liberally irrespective of colour, creed, or even class. Wordsworth was an opera critic when he wrote:

> From low to high doth Dissolution climb,
> And sink from high to low, along a scale
> Of awful notes . . .

On the facts, we might have expected a more spirited protest from our campaigners against staged, filmed or televised sex and violence. In America, even soap opera has just been cleaned up; over here, no one minds the real thing – no doubt because it remains so very far from real, in the British tradition. Earlier Puritans saw to that; and since their time, only comic opera has been taken seriously. The grand variety is so remote from everyday life that we might as well try to censor or evaluate our dreams. All we can do is wallow in them; or, if we can afford it, have them analysed and discussed by specialists for the good of our psyches.

There are several bad reasons why serious opera still stands aloof and privileged. So does its public, for one thing. It began as a patrician ritual, and its modern following (including any element of camp following) tends to be rich or otherwise subsidised by society, like the art-form itself. Admittedly opera critics are a poverty-stricken tribe: see for example the harrowing current account of spiritual profit and financial loss in this autumn's *Author*. That must be why we get free tickets and programmes from a benevolent administration. But the general rule holds: no hand-out, no opera. It would be interesting and perhaps profitable to mark the public money and see where it mainly goes, as the course of underground streams can be traced by dyeing their sources. The springs and even the beds (to continue, not change, the metaphor) may before long become dried up and empty. If so, opera is now rightly protected, like any other rare, beautiful and endangered species. Meanwhile a more clement and propitious environment is clamorously called for. It would surely help if opera were to set its own stately houses in order, and throw them open to a much wider public.

What keeps music-lovers away from such great works in such vast numbers? Not the prices, disconcerting though they sometimes appear. Not the substitution of song for speech, for that is the basis of all popular music. Not the general standards of vocal or instrumental performance, or of scenery, costumes, lighting, production or direction – each of these facets is usually polished and often brilliant. The main deterrent, I think, lies in the deadening traditions and conventions that still dominate the operatic scene, despite the century-old protests of such great critics as Wolf and Shaw.

The chorus still stands around in allegorical postures vividly evocative of listless indifference, especially when being exhorted to work even harder, or fight yet more bravely. That might be ironic realism, of course; but somehow one doubts it. One actively disbelieves it when recent corpses leap through the curtain waving and grinning, in quest of floral and other tributes. Heroes and heroines still sing 'I love you' to the audience and not to each other, thus not only spoiling the work but giving the game away. Inaudible words are even worse, in a verbo-musical art-form; people might as sensibly pay to hear inaudible music. For balanced clarity, conductors must renounce their ultimate resonance, and singers must pronounce their final consonants. Lastly there is audible nonsense, which can be worst of all. Modern opera translations usually avoid such legendary absurdities as 'outraged parenthood in me pants'. But all translation entails heavy losses of some kind. To trade authenticity for expedience, real fruit for wax, must be a bad bargain, especially at Covent Garden; how could a great international opera house have countenanced *Les Troyens* in any English translation, let alone Dent's (a good maxim), as if Berlioz were a form of Berlitz? And might not the English National Opera now reconsider its name and its policy? A London firm publishing foreign novels in translation would need uncommon nerve to trade as English National Literature.

Opera needs all the realism it can get, whether of words or attitudes, if it is not to fall into the hands of claques and cliques. Already there are danger signs. Thus among current London productions (about which more later) the inveterate opera-goer may well feel disposed to eulogise *Euryanthe* as interesting and stigmatise *Salome* as routine. As characters and as music, the former is innocence personified and the latter depravity incarnate. The broad view must prefer the base to the apex, as being not only much more like opera as I see it but infinitely more like popular entertainment as everyone sees it. Support wild life in London: visit *Salome*.

### Among this week's contributors:

JOHN FULLER is the author of *A Reader's Guide to W. H. Auden*. His latest book of poems, *The Mountain in the Sea*, was published in 1975 by Secker.

MICHAEL GILBERT's thrillers include *Death in Captivity, Petrella at Kew, The Etruscan Net, Death has Deep Roots* and *Smallbone Deceased*.

SIR EDWARD PYGGE was for a short time on the resignation honours list of the last Wilson Administration.

# Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

## Heir Today

**Filumena** *Lyric*
**The Days of the Commune** *Aldwych*
**Factory Birds** *Warehouse*

Let's imagine *Filumena* as it might have been written by an English dramatist. It would open very entertainingly: comic vicar, myopic GP and sottish nurse boggling from the sidelines as the main character bounds gamely from her deathbed just a few moments after duping her ageing swain into marrying her. But then the play's arteries would begin to harden. Domenico Soriano, or Hartley Pratt-Johnson as he'd now be rechristened, would no doubt follow the dictates of the plot foisted upon him. He would import a lawyer to procure a speedy annulment, just like his Italian prototype. He would have second thoughts, on learning that Filumena (or Flossie Dawkins) was the mother of three grown-up boys, one of whom was his son He would try, and fail, to discover the identity of this unforeseen heir. He would resign himself to marriage and ignorance There would be zippy lines and zingy exchanges, and yet, somehow, an impressior of thinness, combined with an undeniable lack of tension. The critics would lope off with long faces, steeling their fingers tc bash out 'implausible', 'tasteless' and 'trite on their black and implacable typewriters

How could it be otherwise? We English

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do not, most of us, share a Catholic belief in the indissolubility of marriage, and the importance we attach to the family is far from Neapolitan. We aren't vastly worried nowadays if our wife comes to the altar or, more likely, registry office trailing what our forefathers called 'a past'. We have no mystical devotion to the idea of a son, a boy-child to perpetuate our blood and surname. In brief, we lack many of these cultural quiddities that Eduardo de Filippo proves so amply able to transform into dramatic advantages. So confident is he of sustaining his subject that he can cut the obvious opening, reducing Filumena's miraculous return-to-life to mere reportage, part of the resentful outburst from Domenico with which the play actually begins; and he is, of course, perfectly right to do so. There is entertainment enough in prospect – tension and excitement, too. Peaks and chasms appear on what a dim British perspective had mistaken for a molehill. Nothing less than domestic disaster awaits the protagonists if they fumble or slip. Filumena coolly threatens Domenico with murder, and means it: spiritual death, meaning loss of love, is a more pervasive danger.

It is very much as it was with De Filippo's *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*. Their domestic upheavals matter hugely to these people, and consequently matter to us as well, even at the most ripely Italianate of moments. The closing scene, for instance, sounds sentimental in paraphrase, with Domenico falling to his knees and ignominiously begging for his son's name, and Filumena, never thitherto able to weep, suddenly moaning, shaking and spouting water like a stricken central-heating system. In practice, it overcomes any clipped resistance to 'emotional' foreigners. De Filippo earns such climaxes by dint of his grasp of his characters, or at least of his main ones. He is perhaps a bit skimpy when it comes to showing the reactions of the three sons – what (after all) must it feel like to be summoned to a strange house and bluntly informed by a one-time tart that she's your mother? But there isn't much he doesn't know about the woman who concocted this curious situation and the man doomed to flounder in it. When it comes to diagnosing and clinically recording the varieties of their pain, he's in total command of the theatrical surgery.

This is sombre comedy, but a comedy all the same. Note the unconscious prejudice wittily concealed in Domenico's seemingly innocuous riposte to Filumena's big revelation, 'you have no sons – you don't even have a daughter'. Or consider the sly, funny scene in which the frustrated father tries to unmask the boy with the most in common with himself, lightly quizzing each candidate about his ear for music and the degree of his lechery. With such encounters in train, there was always a danger that Zeffirelli would succumb to his old lure, excessive exuberance. But in spite of the spaghetti-house accents, this is no gaudy fiesta of rococo waiters and waitresses hurling about feelings like overcooked lasagna: the jauntiness that disfigured *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* is absent. On the contrary, it is a pretty concentrated production, exact and exacting in its handling of its overwrought protagonists: Colin Blakely, a feisty and truculent libido, shrivelling, withering, yet somehow maturing over the months of unease and sleeplessness, and Joan Plowright, pale, hurt, but unflinching, a scarred rock with the power both to endure knocks and to rip open people's hulls. It is a long and perilous journey from Naples 1946 to London 1977: but the play has made it, and made it unscathed.

Brecht says somewhere that bad acting can be more effective than good when 'alienation' is aimed at – but who would have expected the RSC, of all groups, to have listened to this distressing injunction? His chronicle of Paris 1871 isn't one of his subtler, richer efforts, though it includes a lively argument about the claims of revolutionary ends over revolutionary means; but it does at least give its cast the chance to communicate the breathlessness, the exhilaration, the confusion and the awful exhaustion of participating in a hectic slice of history. This is so thoroughly missed at the Aldwych that I propose to screw the clamps on further comment, and turn quickly to the company's fringe theatre, where a much more engrossing evening is on offer, thanks to the brash, swaggering acting of Roger Rees and his fellow-performers, the confident direction of Bill Alexander, and the suggestive writing of a dramatist new to me, James Robson.

Some have dismissed *Factory Birds* as dull, bare-boned documentary, relieved, if that's the word, by gratuitous melodrama. I disagree. True, we've seen industrial prisons before, usually at the Royal Court; and, equally true, the first half is mostly taken up with establishing the ennui of the lathe-operators, swapping football-shouts and casual salacities as the typing-pool looks on from its aquarium. It's yet another reminder, though put with more than ordinary eloquence, of the raw energy our society tends to squash and squander. But then someone clouts a secretary with an iron bar camouflaged in a copy of *Playboy*, rapes her, and leaves her for dead. The villain is not, most probably, one of the overalled louts we already know, but he is clearly from much the same bestiary; and Mr Robson's logical chain becomes clear. Boredom, bitterness and rage lead naturally enough to violence, and the sexual obsessions that provide mental escape in such circumstances make it likely that the violence, too, will be sexual. In a way, machines provoke rape. That may be true, and it may not; but it is at least something that's mainly been missing from the debate that has preoccupied our socially-conscious stages over the past 20 years, a fresh idea.

# Films

**John Coleman**

# Valium of the Dolls

**Welcome to LA** (AA) *The Screen on the Hill, Haverstock Hill*
**Salon Kitty** (X) *Prince Charles*
**Crime Busters** (A) *Warner West End*

Welcome, anyway, to a spanking new 339-seat, first-run cinema – and Londoners, which includes those who arrange the ordering of press shows, please note that not everything worthy of view and review is displayed within the environs of some godforsaken little acre up West. The gutsy Romaine Hart has branched out from her successfully eclectic Screen on the Green in Islington to a second Screen, Hampstead way, where the policy will be to root out and present unconsidered truffles. As openers, she offers Alan Rudolph's *Welcome to LA*, unquestionably the week's best buy. Rudolph is a youngish protégé and assistant of Robert Altman; he worked as a.d. on *Nashville*, *California Split* and *The Long Goodbye* and co-wrote the screenplay of *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*; it is Altman who encouraged to the extent of producing Rudolph's first venture as both writer and director, which is – as Rudolph is urgent to point out – not to be regarded as 'Nashville Part II'.

No, indeed. To begin with, it is that sprawling city of Los Angeles – so explored on celluloid in recent years that actually to visit it might well prove a letdown – which furnishes the blackcloth. 'LA is the common denominator of contemporary society. It's the promised land gone a little sour.' Thus Mr Rudolph again, in interview. And he has gone to some pains to demote and depopulate his celebrated slide area. Unlike Altman, he keeps his ten principal characters severely away from big crowds, mumbling contexts. Visually, he has aimed for careful compositions somewhere along a line from muted Matisse to Mondrian. Aurally, he has committed himself to a close collaboration with the songwriter and performer, Richard Baskin, who did the music for *Nashville* and *Buffalo Bill* and here appears as a barely glimpsed, arrogant big-league singer making an album. Baskin's *City of the One Night Stands* suite is an inescapable element in the structure of the movie.

A pity, because his songs provide all-too-forgettable (and sometimes inaudible) links between episodes varying from indulgent to formidable – one has the sense afterwards of a sort of 'musical beds' played out – and *Welcome* has as its central figure Keith Carradine, kept deliberately null, as Carroll Barber, the chappie who wrote the genius-ballads and has been inveigled back from self-exile in England to please his yoghurt-millionaire dad, Carl (Denver Pyle), for Christmas. The agent of his recall is stunningly played by Viveca Lindfors, a hag-

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gard beauty who clearly expects a repeat of sexual favours somewhere in the past from Keith/Carroll, and is as clearly depressed when the lad turns up wearing an Irish tweed hat, swiggable half-pints in every pocket and no meaningful expression. *La Ronde* has been invoked to describe the sexual switches that ensue: what really happens, beyond belief, sets Carroll rather as a pallid spider gobbling up every female insect in sight. These include Sally Kellerman, given a chance for once, as a reined-in hysterical realtor in a bad marriage; Lauren Hutton (a glorious model turned actress) as a photographer who snaps corners and is also his pa's mistress; Sissy Spacek as Linda, a scatty girleen who prefers to housekeep for Carroll topless and gets tangled in a couple of affairs; and Geraldine Chaplin, in her best outing to date, as the wife doomy Carroll doesn't quite make. Miss Chaplin is married to Harvey Keitel in the movie, this chameleon actor turning in a tremendous performance as the dairy-dad's right-hand man, too busy to notice his wife is going round the twist: when she coughs up a storm in admiration of Garbo's Camille, he asks, 'Do you take anything for that?' 'Valium,' she beams.

Much of the dialogue has its appealing, random shake-ups (Rudolph has a sharp ear for on-the-wing throwaways which are also give-aways) and it is easy to see how jaded Americans would discover freshness in this dislocated, glamorous comedy of Eros. No one is poor, except emotionally. Freaks rule. It's an image of a very small part of the US that a very small part of its population – those who make and those who review movies – is horribly open to recognising, and so applauding. It depicts an arrested society, or fragment of it, revolving round a hollow fellow. That the film's people find him so intriguing is their problem. Mine is sorting out – as I hardly have here – my pleasure in the event from my irritation. But that, of course, is where Altman's aleatory presence casts its shadow and where Rudolph does, after all, link up with his mentor. LA could also stand for larking about.

Tinto Brass's *Salon Kitty* is marginally less nasty than *The Night Porter* and similar salacious exercises in sexually capitalising on Nazi beastliness. For all the relation it bears to the facts upon which it claims to be based, though, it is a silly, dirty deed. Twenty died-in-the-roots women devoted to Hitler's crusade are recruited to staff a bugged brothel, run by a reluctant madam, eerily embodied by Ingrid Thulin. There is a stupendously ludicrous early scene wherein the selected score are lined up starkers to be initiated by an equivalent number of SS men; loud music accompanies the sexual callisthenics – marching as to whore? This is followed by an unpleasant peep-hole into cells sequence, when Helmut Berger yeas or nays those prepared to be humped by dwarfs, hairy idots, dikes, and Jews on a day's furlough from the camps. Ken Adam did the sets, but no one deserves credit.

They tell me that Terence Hill and Bud Spencer (new viewers begin here) are a combination guaranteed to rake in money at box-offices all over Europe. One gets more worried about Europe every day. *Crime Busters*, woefully assembled by E. B. Clucher (in life, as if it mattered, one Enzo Barboni), is something like the 11th time they have been together in a dubbed Italian-made farrago of would-be humourousness. The pathetic, recurrent fights are thanks to Giogio Ubaldi. The 21st London Film Festival opens next Monday. Support it. Reports later.

# Television

**Julian Barnes**

# Puppy Ire

In *World of Sport* (LWT), Britain's Eddie Kidd, the teenage motorbike stunt star, leaped over a dozen double-decker buses; in *A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers* (Yorkshire), Britain's Harold Wilson, the retired high-wire expert, began heel-and-toeing it over a dozen double-decker prime ministers. Both feats are made to look rather more vertiginous than they actually are; both dare-devils, you'll be unsurprised to hear, are landing on soft mattresses of money. Wilson's and Frost's sales-pitch for his series (and for the accompanying book, reviewed by Sir Edward Pygge on p. 461) is, of course, that he is the only man in England (bar three) who can bring genuine inside knowledge to bear. He wandered ruminatively along a line of marble statues of his predecessors: 'If you've done the same job yourself . . . you think of them as fellow-professionals.' Fair enough; except that his opening fireside about Harold Macmillan wasn't exactly filled with insights about Mac's years as PM. Instead, we heard a lot about his style, his being a poseur and a conjuror, and a good deal about the duels he and Harold had in the Commons: 'exchanging rapier stuff across the House . . . like a tennis match with both of us at the net' (and in case you're not impressed by that, you try hitting a tennis ball with an epée). What seemed most to engage Wilson's affection – not to say envy – was Mac's cavalier way with his own party; and Wilson confided, from his own experience, that running a party was like driving a stagecoach: as long as it's rattling along there's no trouble from the passengers, but once you stop at the crossroads and they get out and look at the map to see where they're going, you get into difficulties. To give him his due, the full implications of this metaphor did seem completely lost on its perpetrator.

To give him a bit more due, Harold was clearly making an effort to play the serene, objective elder statesman: why, he even permitted a few long-shots of his new tonsure. But he does have this terrible problem with his self-esteem: just as a sentence seems to be taking a modest, kindly course, it suddenly gets out of hand, turns ratty, and makes its owner look a monster of conceit. I mean, take Derek Amory and Peter Thorneycroft, who succeeded Macmillan at the Treasury: nice enough chaps to be sure, but, do you know, if you said to Derek the sort of thing you were accustomed to saying quite casually to Mac, the wretched fellow used to look at you 'like a wounded stag'? And as for poor old Alec – well, Mac was 'vastly more fun' than him. All in all, Harold was head and shoulders above everyone . . . except, we gathered the other Harold: the screen was adazzle with reflected glory. Wittily, Wilson was asked how he would react if he were compared to Macmillan. 'Well, I wouldn't issue a writ for libel,' he quipped. You bet; he'd be ordering xerox copies.

Frost himself, who has modestly tendered Boswell's name to elucidate his own role in the enterprise, sported a blazer which lived up to its name: a central bank of brass buttons shone like a battery of floodlights – presumably so that he could be located if there were a power cut. He tossed Harold questions like soft cushions, and occasionally cut up really rough with the feather duster. In his intro, Harold had referred to Macmillan as 'an old-world, almost an aristocratic figure'. Frost then grilled him viciously in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's sumptuous broom-cupboard in the Palace of Westminster: 'This is an elegant, old-fashioned, almost aristocratic room – er, is this the way you see him?' Harold just managed to field that one.

Soft encounters, indeed, seemed the order of the week. Michael Parkinson managed to stay unembarrassed by a dangerously hyperactive Gracie Fields (BBC-1), and Peter France grovelled bafflingly in *Everyman* (BBC-1) to Charles Shulz, creator of that anodyne and sentimental comic strip *Peanuts*. France informed us that Shulz had 'a sensitivity to life that amounts to a philosophy – some might almost say a theology'; Shulz, a hazy fundamentalist, didn't disagree, and said that 'Charlie Brown is somewhat like a line of poetry', his evidence for this bizarre claim being that the young son of a friend of his had once come home from school and announced: 'I feel just like Charlie Brown.' We then watched toy Snoopies tossing pancakes, running railways, and making lots of money, until France summed up the Master's philosophy: 'it all boils down to "what counts is the way you treat other people".' Or maybe that's theology – I'm not sure.

Oddest conjunction of the week, though, was that between Arnold Schwarzenegger's 'body' and Janet Street-Porter's 'voice' on *The London Weekend Show* (LWT). For once, Arnold's dirigible musculature and the perky brain which surprisingly tops it off were made to seem normal physical phenomena by setting them beside the Street-Porter vocalisation technique. How on earth does it function? The phonemes, one imagines, must come humming off her vocal chords in the standard way, surge up the larynx, and issue into the mouth in the usual optimistic frame of mind. Suddenly, they realise they are trapped: there is a great Berlin wall of teeth straight ahead; the jaw-muscles have been concreted over; no exit visas are being issued. They can either beat their heads in against the choppers or drown in the saliva. Bravely, they opt for the only route still open and make a dive for the nasal cavities:

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good thinking, except that this pathway to the outside world contains pitfalls and dangers too hideous to contemplate. In the meantime, on the outside, Janet is cheekily trying to distract attention from the oral carnage: red lips, pink glasses, and red/pink/orange/brown/etc hair. The lips keep moving energetically, in an attempt to persuade you that the noises must be coming from the mouth. But the pretence is vain: for the few exhausted sounds that do stumble out into the air are horribly stained with nasalisation. I did, actually, manage to piece together a couple of words during the half-hour show. Janet kept telling us about 'puppy ire', which helps build up muscles; it was, one assumed, the sort of mean, aggressive mood you had to get into with yourself if you were to do any good. Turned out she was endearingly, but hopelessly, trying to plug Arnold's new film, *Pumping Iron*.

# Music

**Andrew Clements**

# Op. Art

**Maurizio Pollini** *Festival Hall*

Not long ago, Pollini was a source of much wonderment. Here was arguably the most perfectly turned-out pianist you could hope to hear, gilding every phrase with impeccable finesse, yet who sometimes appeared curiously uninvolved with what he was playing. The music was shown off like some precious stone, catching only reflected light; inner warmth was lacking. His future was then difficult to predict. He might have continued along his Apollonian path, producing note-perfect performances that eventually became sterile, or he might have tempered his objectivity with the under-stated rubato that could just be read between the lines of some of his recordings. Certainly his total involvement in everything he did could not be doubted. On the continent he crusaded for contemporary music, Stockhausen's Piano Pieces and Boulez's Second Sonata rubbing shoulders in his programmes with the standard repertoire. In his home town, Milan, he organised workers' concerts with his fellow Marxists Claudio Abbado and Luigi Nono, taking music into the factories and opening La Scala to a much wider public. The remote, self-effacing figure who appeared annually in London for recitals that kept to the well-trodden ways – Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Chopin – was obviously not the whole story. British audiences he evidently regarded as an irretrievably lost cause, to be given the music they expected.

In prospect his two Festival Hall recitals of the last six Beethoven sonatas appeared to be more box-office fodder. Yet they showed an unexpected and glorious ripening of his interpretative powers in the most demanding repertoire of all, such complete, rounded performances that they established him at once as without peer among younger pianists. The inflections and gestures that previously were so submerged in live performances as to be hardly detectable are now obvious enough to make their point without disturbing the seamless integration of each movement. The Pollini of three years ago would never have spaced out the opening bars of Op. 111's arietta so generously or to such magical effect, or made the pauses in the first movement of Op. 90 so laden with significance. The first recital (Opp. 90, 101 and 106) was not quite on the level of the second – it contained the only less than satisfying movements he played. He missed the wit in the march of Op. 101 (in the same way that he takes the central movement of Schumann's C major Fantasy with too much of a straight face) and in the throwaway scherzo of the *Hammerklavier*. Yet much, much more was perfectly realised: extraordinary clarity in the development fugato of the *Hammerklavier*, a wonderful thread of melody in the adagio and supreme concentration in the final fugue, even if it was a shade too controlled for maximum excitement.

The last three sonatas are so perfectly suited to Pollini's present powers that his performances even improved on the recording of Opp. 109 and 110 released 18 months ago. There the scherzos of each seemed unduly violent, a throwback to the period when he seemed to be trying to build an aesthetic on severe keyboard manners, battering works like Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* into submission. Now they have mellowed, more perfectly matched with the rest of his interpretations. His view of Op. 111 was new; a strikingly dramatic first movement full of sudden contrasts, a set of variations perfectly poised from the statement of the theme.

Originally Deutsche Grammophon planned to bring out new recordings of Opp. 101, 106 and 111 to coincide with the recitals. Boxed with the existing versions of Op. 109 and 110, they promise great things.

# Weekend Competition

**No 2489** **Set by E. O. Parrott**

The punks hardly need any encouragement from us, but it might be fun to have some punk versions of *Tipperary*, *Rule Britannia*, *God Save the Queen* or any other traditional ditty, full of exhortations to skin your cat, kick your granny, etc. Twelve lines max, by 25 November.

**Result of No 2486 Set by Johnny Option**

This was the one with a lustrous eye to K. Amis's *Oxford Book of Light Verse*: write on any modern topic in the style of a light-verse master.

**Report** **by Jack Degree**

Richard Shepherd offered us, rather guilelessly, 'a poem in honour of KA, one of the greatest modern practitioners of tough reasonableness'; chippy old J. Y. Watson, on the other hand, wrote a bit of libellous doggerel attacking the great man ('He's scarcely qualified to judge/– Unless an alcoholic drudge . . .', etc). Dear oh dear: you'll have to be a bit more devious than *that*. Otherwise, this was a very healthy entry, and I hope one or two of the winners can be squeezed into that *Oxford Book* (if they aren't there already). £7 apiece, and a copy of Partridge's *Catch Phrases* to Mr Stanley J. Sharpless.

The Victor Vanquished: A Tall Story
(after Thomas Hood)

Young Victor's zoo-mate greeted him
With high-pitched girlish laughter,
'You've got a neck,' she slyly said,
'If necking's what giraffeter.'

'You've guessed aright,' Victor replied,
Not slow to take his cue,
'Come – be my mate – I'll demonstrate
I can knock spots off you.'

Thus saying, Victor mounted her
And started amorous play,
Which turned quite unexpectedly
To a bizarre dis-splay.

He did the splits but failed to rise,
Although he strained and kicked – oh
What a lovely way to die,
*In flagrante delicto.*

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

After Ogden Nash

I get the idea there's a new critical tendency
That's taking over academia with a
vengeance, see?
Not that I'm against progress, but my peeve is
Just when I've digested Empson, Trilling
and Leavis
A whole lot of fresh names are suddenly
*à la carte*
Like Saussure, Jacobowsky, Metz, Propp
and Barthes
And the modern list of literary 'q's and 'p's is
Full of really weird, unfamiliar expressions
like diegesis,
Not to mention twin-sets such as syntagmatic/
paradigmatic or synchronic/diachronic.
It makes a guy feel kinda moronic,
Like he's lacking an ace in the hole
If he has to think twice about the distinction
between *langue* and *parole*.
In fact, the effort of keeping up with the
structuralists
Could make you a statistic on the intellectual
rupture-lists.

BASIL RANSOME

The More, the Meedier
(after Ogden Nash)

Things in Britain seem to be getting seedier
and seedier:
Or is it just the meedier?
Sometimes I ask myself why it is that meedier
men almost never choose
To lay off the bad news.
I mean, look at the way they go on
about Grunwick,
A subject you'd think everybody would be only
too happy to have done wick.
And then there's Jeremy:
I admit the poor guy is his own worst eremy,
But is that any reason why meedier men should
yell and yodel
The whole goddam time about that
male model?
And why do they keep showing us the fuzzy
face of a young prig who took his tape
recorder into a banquet,
Expecting to be thanket?
Personally, I suggest they put on a new record,
and start telling us how wonderful things are
in Britain for a change:
Or else go catch mange.

PETER PETERSON

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Tony Miles

# Chess

**No 58 The Anglo-Dutch Match**

The annual Anglo-Dutch match was held this year at Elvetham Hall, near Hartley Wintney, Hants. Often in the past this match has been little more than a social gathering, but with the rising standards of both Dutch and English chess, and the two countries expecting to field their strongest teams, this time it had a little more significance. In the event the English side was weakened by the last-minute withdrawals of Keene and Stean, but the match was nonetheless a hard-fought contest.

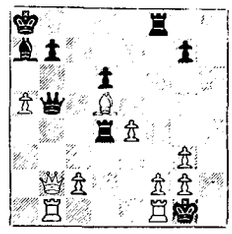
In the first round I lost yet another Dragon to Timman (the third this year!) but Nunn and Mestel beat Donner and Ree respectively. Unfortunately Bellin disappeared down a long prepared line, and Webb was ground down to give the Dutch a one-point advantage. The second round seemed to be going even worse. After three hours play boards 1 and 3 had been drawn, but of the remainder, boards 7 and 8 were unclear and the rest bad!

Things started to look up a bit when Langeweg offered a draw in a won position, thinking Webb had a perpetual check, and then Hartoch mislaid a rook. At the adjournment the score was 4-3 to the Dutch (9½-7½ overall) but Bellin and Jana Hartston had emerged from their earlier difficulties and the last 3 games duly produced the 2½ points necessary to draw the match. Remarkably this is the third consecutive draw between the sides.

The individual scores: Miles 0/½ Timman 1/½, Hartston ½/½, Sosonko ½/½, Nunn 1/½, Donner 0/½, Mestel 1/0, Ree 0/1, Webb 0/½, Langeweg 1/½, Bellin 0/1, Ligterink 1/0, Speelman ½/1, Hartoch ½/0, Whiteley ½/½, Kuijpers ½/½, J. Hartston ½/1, van der Mije ½/0, Taulbot ½/0, Jansen ½/1. **England 10, Holland 10.**

**White: A. J. Mestel Black H. Ree**

**1. P-K4, P-K4; 2. N-KB3, N-QB3; 3. B-N5, N-B3; 4. P-Q4, N x KP; 5. P x P, P-Q4; 6. QN-Q2 B-KN5; 7. P-KR3, B-R4; 8. Q-K2, N x N; 9. B x N, B-B4; 10. B-K3, Q-K2; 11. 0-0-0, 0-0; 12. R x P, B x Bch; 13. Q x B, N-N5; 14. R-Q7, Q-K3; 15. R x QBP, B x N; 16. P x B, N-Q4; 17. B-B4, N x Q; 18. B x Q, P x B; 19. P x N, R x P; 20. R x P, R x KP; 21. R-N1, P-N3; 22. R-Q1, R x P; 23. R(1)-Q7, P-QR4; 24. P-B4, R-R4; 25. K-B2, R-QB1; 26. K-N3, P-N4; 27. P-B5, R-R6ch; 28. K-R4, R-R5ch; 29. K-R3, R-R6ch; 30. P-N3, P-N5; 31. P-B6, R-KB6; 32. R-N7ch, K-B1; 33. R x RP, K-N1; 34. R(N)-N7ch, K-B1; 35. P-B7, P-N6; 36. R-N4, K-K1; 37. R-N8ch, R-B1; 38. R x Rch, K x R; 39. R-R8ch Resigns.**



**Problem 58**

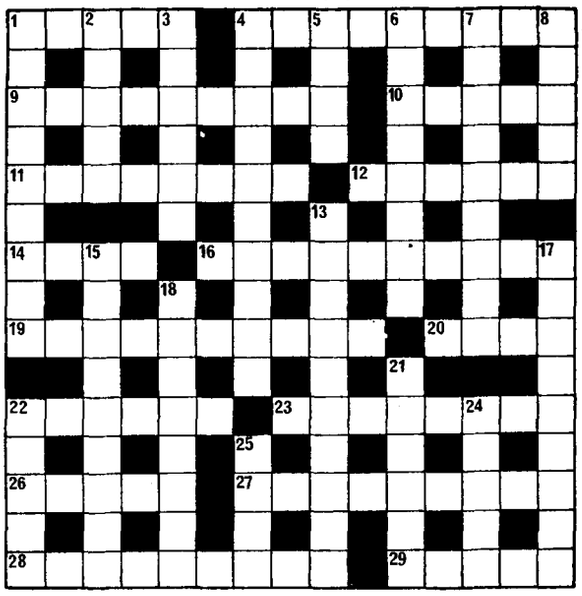
Black to play is three pawns down and appears to be under great pressure. How should he continue? Answers to me at the NS postmarked not later than 23 November.

**Solution to Problem 56**

1. . . . Q-N1! and if 2. B x Q, K x B or 2. P-N3, Q x B; 3. P x Q, K-N1 and white is powerless to stop the KP.

# Weekend Crossword 1241

**PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1241, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 22 November.**



ACROSS

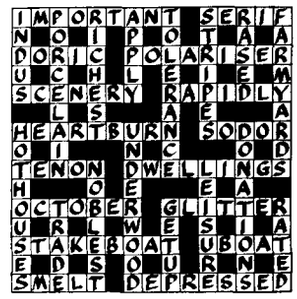
1. Fanatical through being born during attack (5).
4. Political programmes for redistributing farm plots (9).
9. Give a ring and then elope in disguise (9).
10. The lowest place back in Florida near the sea (5).
11. Place in French art reserved for architecture (8).
12. Not murdered, the missionary having not been stoned? (6).
14. Although the boy carries nothing, it is a burden (4).
16. Possibly his cannot fill one of these posts 10).
19. Leather building round a patch of grass (10).
20. A girl's love for a brave man (4).
22. Plane which is like nothing in existence (6).
23. Spies act mysteriously, getting away from reality (8).
26. Burn for 1 -50 (5).
27. Start training with a philosopher as preparation for marriage (9).
28. Girl who has to study deportment (9).
29. Transactions held in universal esteem (5).

DOWN

1. Bags which are the product of cruelties (9).
2. Boffin's girl (5).
3. Representative who has responsibility outside the record (6).
4. The qualities of respectable relationships (10).
5. The climax is an animal kiss (4).
6. Window which provides escape but with an interruption (8).
7. Gilbert's red blood? (9).
8. Shoot for a nail (5).
13. Emphasise although it is below the mark (10).
15. No man is confused about sport or play (9).
17. Quicker ways to produce neat hair styles? (9).
18. The most outspoken rave loudly about the bird in the film (8).
21. Services for the people (6).
22. Undeveloped as one existing in ancient times (5).
24. I am in trade as a matter of principle (5).
25. School which gives you your money back (4).

SETSQUARE

**Solution to No 1239**



**Prizewinners to No 1239**

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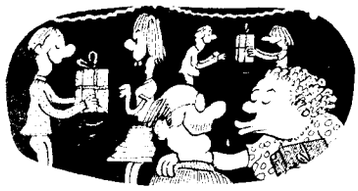

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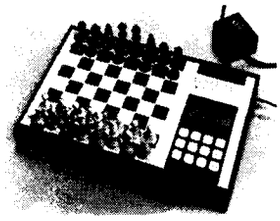

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| Time — GMT | Metrebands |
|---|---|
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| 12.00 — 12.30 | 41, 49 |
| 16.00 — 16.30 | 31, 49 |
| 18.30 — 19.00 | 41, 49 |
| 20.30 — 21.00 | 41, 49 |
| 22.30 — 23.00 | 41, 49 and 200 metres |

All entrants, successful or otherwise, will be contacted by mail. The trips to and around Poland will take place at a date to be set by the Polish Radio. Entries should be post-marked not later than 31 December 1977, and addressed to:

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# Courses—see also page 672

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**NEW STATESMAN**

Vol. 94 No. 2434

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# Theatres

**ALDWYCH THEATRE** (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded booking *info:* 836 5332. 'The Comedy of Errors'. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Brecht's 'The Days of the Commune'. Ibsen's 'Pillars of the Community'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse at Donmar Theatre with 'Macbeth' (sold out). James Robson's 'Factory Birds'. C. P. Taylor's 'Bandits' (not suitable for children).

**HAMPSTEAD THEATRE.** 722 9301. 'The Elephant Man' by Bernard Pomerance. Evs. 8 p.m.

**NATIONAL THEATRE.** 928 2252. 'The Country Wife', 'Bedroom Farce', 'The Lady from Maxim's', 'State of Revolution', 'Lavender Blue', 'Half Life'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

**ROYAL COURT.** 730 1745. Evgs 7.30. Sats 5 & 8. Janet Suzman in 'The Good Woman of Setzuan'. Must end 19 Nov.

**THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR.** 95 61107. Opens Tues. 'Two and Two Make Sex' by Richard Harris and Leslie Darbon.

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# Meetings

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**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON:** The 1977 Creighton Lecture will be given by Professor M. M. Postan, FBA, entitled: 'The English Rural Labourer in the Later Middle Ages' at 5.30 p.m. on 14 November 1977 at the University of London, Senate House (Beveridge Hall), Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Department.

**SEMINAR ON 'ZIONISM . . . and how to fight it'.** Newcastle. Saturday 19 November. Subjects include Arab Boycott of Israel, Zionist oppression of Oriental Jews, Israel-South Africa cooperation, the Law of 'Return' and Aliyah. Admission by ticket only. Organised by the British Anti-Zionist Organisation (in association with the Arab Students Union). Contact: George Mitchell, 90 John St, Glasgow G1.

**ADLERIAN SOCIETY.** 'The Many Faces of Inferiority', James Hemming PhD. Tues. 15 Nov., 7.30 p.m. Mary Sumner Hall, 24 Tufton St. SW1. All welc. 50p. (Studs 25p.).

**THEOSOPHY** Commemoration Meeting. Free. Sun. 13 Nov. 8 p.m. 'The Theosophical Movement'. S.a.e. free pamphlet, booklist. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

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| WEYMOUTH Pavilion Theatre | Nov 15–19 |
| BATH Theatre Royal | Nov 22–26 |
| SOUTHSEA Kings Theatre | Nov 29–Dec 3 |
| HORSHAM (Cosi) Arts Centre Christs Hospital | Dec 6 |
| CANTERBURY (Iphigenia) Marlowe Theatre | Dec 9, 10 |
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**Courses—see also p. 671**

# Prize

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Southern Arts announce a new annual literature prize to be given to a writer resident in the region*. This year's winner will receive £250 and the award will be for a book, published between 1 January and 31 December 1977, which falls into one of the following categories: fiction, volumes of poetry, short story collections, literary biography.

Further details from The Literature Officer, Southern Arts Association, 19 Southgate Street, Winchester SO23 9EB.

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